

Apocalypse Lost:
Evangelicals, Environmentalism, and the End of the World

by

Robert E. Fuller

A Dissertation Presented in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Philosophy

Approved January 2024 by the
Graduate Supervisory Committee:

Hava Tirosh-Samuels, Chair
Christopher Jones
Evan Berry

ARIZONA STATE UNIVERSITY

May 2024

ABSTRACT

Since the 1980s, academics and activists attempting to explain why American evangelicals have supported politicians with controversial environmental track records—from James Watt to James Inhofe—have framed such believers as apocalyptic fatalists content to pillage Creation until Jesus raptures them to safety and destroys the Earth. Today evangelicals maintain higher levels of climate skepticism and lower levels of support for environmental legislation than other religious groups—seemingly confirming the “End Times Apathy Hypothesis.” However, the history of such Rapture-believing, premillennial evangelicals reveals surprisingly sensitive attitudes toward science, nature, and the environmental crisis that stand in stark contrast to popular depictions.

Far from promoting anti-science and anti-environmental attitudes, premillennialism has historically encouraged a *this*-worldly interest in empirical science as believers saw the natural world as a source of revelation and sought to discern the “signs of the times.” It has also offered a flexible theological framework capable of assimilating the most dire findings by environmental scientists and meeting them with hope. Prophecy popularizers such as Billy Graham and Hal Lindsay wrote books which sold in the millions and carried with them the latest findings and predictions by environmental scientists—making them, in effect, some of the most effective science communicators of the twentieth century. Where environmental skepticism has entered evangelicalism, it has been through postmillennial Christian Reconstructionism—a movement deeply opposed to premillennialism—and its promotion of economic cornucopianism, Young Earth Creationism, Christian America historical revisionism, and organizations like the Cornwall Alliance. To make evangelicals into anti-environmentalists, these Reconstructionists first had to unmake them as premillennialists.

This interdisciplinary dissertation demonstrates how history and theology can explain evangelicals’ shifting attitudes toward environmentalism. From their early concerns over nuclear

testing through their participation in the first Earth Day and up to the eve of the millennium, premillennialism drove evangelicals to take seriously the growing concerns for Creation's condition and their present attitudes of skepticism and antagonism represent a divergence from this hitherto untold story of apocalyptic environmentalism.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The debts of gratitude which I have incurred in completing this dissertation are many. Foremost among them are the years' worth of mentorship and exceptional feedback I have received from my chair, Professor Hava Tirosh-Samuelson. Above all, this venerable scholar has imparted to an aspiring one the conviction that beliefs and ideas matter in history. My other committee members, Professor Christopher Jones and Professor Evan Berry, have similarly provided models of scholarly rigor in addition to consistent support on behalf of myself and fellow graduate students. This project would not have been successful without their guiding hands. Additionally, I would like to thank Dr. Gaymon Bennett and Dr. Ben Hurlbut who, along with Dr. Tirosh-Samuelson, invited me to collaborate on interdisciplinary work such as the Center for the Study of Religion and Conflict's "Beyond Secularization" project where I was able to test many of this dissertation's arguments while receiving feedback and encouragement at every point along the way.

Across Arizona State University's campus, numerous staff members have assisted in making my studies possible, productive, and enjoyable. Mark Barrios ensured that I remained properly registered with the department while also providing frequent conversations about football and other much-needed diversions. The staff at Hayden Library regularly put their skills on display as they quickly fulfilled increasingly obscure interlibrary loans even in the midst of a global pandemic.

Several individuals whose life work is relevant to this project graciously made themselves available to me and spent hours discussing the finer points of my arguments and sharing personal details. E. Calvin Beisner at the Cornwall Alliance, Dave Bookless at A Rocha International and Lausanne Movement, Richard Cizik (former VP for the National Association of Evangelicals) at Evangelicals for Democracy, Don Sage at Harvest House, and Martin Selbrede at the Chalcedon Foundation each offered warm conversation and key insights which have added a depth to this dissertation that would not have been possible otherwise.

My academic journey has been a winding one and, working backwards, I would like to thank my M.A. thesis advisor Dr. Joyce Goldberg (the sight of purple ink will always remind me of your feedback) at the University of Texas at Arlington as well as Dr. Stephanie Cole who admitted me into the program and also advised my thesis. Before that, as a seventeen-year old far from home, I studied at Baptist Bible College where I not only grew up but also learned the importance of theology. I will always be indebted to the godly education provided there by teachers such as Ray Adams, Bill Levergood, James Sewell, Terry Allcorn, Paul Cameron, and Nick McClure. Additionally, the staff of the *Baptist Bible Tribune*, led by Randy Harp, were incredibly gracious in providing me with archival materials.

In saving my most personal thanks for last, I would not have been mentally or physically able to complete this dissertation without the support of my fellow graduate students and family. Billy Holly was the first to welcome me to ASU and has been a

constant friend ever since. Marc Vance has been a true friend to my family and a companion to countless Sun Devils athletic events. I am incredibly grateful to have reconnected with Nick Shadid—a friend since our undergraduate days—here at ASU. Others including Tom Beasley, Claudia ElDib, Abbie Harlow, Daniel Milowski, and Harry Suwanto provided camaraderie and invaluable conversations. Special thanks is due also to my lifelong friend Carson Stones who patiently endured years of frenetic and often disjointed conversations as I slowly worked out the arguments of this dissertation and encouraged me at every step.

Closer to home, I offer a posthumous thank you to my father and a perennial one to my mother. As I approach something of an academic mountaintop, I think back to the countless hours they invested in homeschooling me—instilling a lifelong love of learning along the way. My son Buck, without a doubt the best surprise I have received since moving to the desert, has offered me joy surpassing any life achievement. Lastly, to my wife Thia, I can offer only the humblest of thanks. An entire library of books could hardly contain a full account of the love and support you have furnished me with over these years.

	Page
GLOSSARY OF KEY TERMS	ix
GLOSSARY OF KEY FIGURES & ORGANIZATIONS	xiv
SCRIPTURE INDEX	xix

CHAPTER

INTRODUCTION: THE WINDS HAVE CHANGED	1
Christianity: The Root of the Crisis?	9
Academic Interpretations: Sociologists and Conflicting Data.....	10
Academic Interpretations: Historians and the “Moral Minority”	17
Activistic Interpretations: The End-Times Apathy Hypothesis	22
Thesis: Premillennial Environmentalism and Postmillennial Skepticism	31
1: “AN EXQUISITELY BEAUTIFUL ORB”: THE APOCALYPTIC ROOTS OF EVANGELICAL ENVIRONMENTALISM	40
Defining Evangelicals and Their Millennial Beliefs	41
The Historical Development of Christian Millennialism.....	47
Apocalyptic Empiricism Versus Apocalyptic Nationalism.....	53
Premillennialists and the Atomic Threat to Creation	71
The Changing Climate: A Premillennial Warning of Climate Change	84
Builders of Continents: A Postmillennialism Glimpse into the Atomic Age	86
Biblical Literalism and Postwar Science	89
Rousas J. Rushdoony and the Roots of Christian Reconstructionism	92
Rushdoony’s Views on Science, Nature, Economics, and the Nation	104
Lynn White Jr. and the Challenge to Christianity	109
2: THE PROPHECY EXPLOSION: THE 1970S AND THE FLOWERING OF EVANGELICAL ENVIRONMENTALISM.....	116

CHAPTER	Page
Premillennialists and the Pollution Threat to Creation	116
Francis Schaeffer’s Evangelical Ecotheology.....	124
Prophecy Popularizers Take Up Environmentalism	137
Early Backlash Against Premillennial Environmentalism.....	152
Institutional Support for Environmentalism: A Flourish and a Slow Fade.....	155
Prophecy Popularizers: Environmentalists’ Faithful Friends in the 1970s.....	162
The Green Influence of Premillennial Missions: The Lausanne Movement	191
The Birth of Christian Reconstructionism	200
Christian Reconstructionism’s Emerging Anti-Environmentalism.....	208
3: TARES AMONG THE WHEAT: THE 1980S AND THE POLITICIZATION OF EVANGELICAL ENVIRONMENTALISM	220
Premillennialism Complicates Evangelical Politics	221
Ronald Reagan and James Watt Complicate Premillennialism	227
The End-Times Apathy Hypothesis Goes Mainstream.....	234
Sorting Out Watt’s Ecotheology	237
Prophecy Popularizers Continue to Promote Environmentalism.....	241
Christian Reconstructionism: Schism and Growing Influence.....	248
Creation Science as a Conduit for Postmillennial Environmental Skepticism....	256
Homeschooling as a Conduit for Postmillennial Environmental Skepticism.....	267
“Christian America” Historical Revisionism as a Conduit for Postmillennial Environmental Skepticism	276
Anti-Paganism as a Conduit for Postmillennial Environmental Skepticism	286
The Dispensationalist-Reconstructionist Debates.....	293
The Coalition on Revival: Apocalyptic Armistice or Millennial Muzzle?	301
4: LEFT BEHIND: THE 1990S AND EVANGELICAL ENVIRONMENTALISM IN TRANSITION.....	313
The Eco-Millennial Dimensions of the Gulf War.....	313
“Corporate Raiders for Jesus”: The State of Premillennial Publishing	317

CHAPTER	Page
Tim LaHaye: Premillennial Evangelist, Postmillennial Activist	321
The Last Days of Premillennial Environmentalism	332
The Amillennial Strand of Evangelical Environmentalism	346
Institutional Support for Evangelical Environmentalism Grows	352
Reconstructionism: Declining Visibility, Growing Influence	358
The Post-Reconstructionists: Larry Burkett	368
The Post-Reconstructionists: The Turning Point Series	377
The Post-Reconstructionists: E. Calvin Beisner	381
Y2K and the End of Premillennial Environmentalism	395
5: THE GREAT DISAPPOINTMENT: THE HOPE AND COLLAPSE OF EVANGELICAL ENVIRONMENTALISM	403
Premillennial Diversions: The Bible Code, 9/11, and Zionism	404
Rushdoony’s Ghost: Christian Textbooks	409
Richard Cizik and the Evangelical Environmental Network	413
Alienating Premillennialists: The ECI’s Self-Sabotage	420
Pat Robertson Lends Support	424
The ECI Collapses	427
Beisner Presses His Advantage	433
Premillennialism Turns Anti-Environmental	437
Nary A Remnant	448
EPILOGUE: “LIVING RESPONSIBLY ON THE EDGE OF TIME AND ETERNITY”	455
BIBLIOGRAPHY	478

GLOSSARY OF KEY TERMS

Amillennialism—The Christian eschatological belief which emerged in the fifth century and holds that Jesus Christ will not rule over a physical thousand-year kingdom, but rather is presently ruling over the Church. Apocalyptic texts like Revelation symbolically describe the challenges Christians face on Earth and Christ’s eventual second coming will inaugurate the end of time. Many of the most politically active evangelical environmentalists have been amillennialists.

Anthropocene—The proposed designation for the present geological period (typically dated to the 1950s) in which *homo sapiens* and their civilization have become the dominant force in shaping the Earth’s climate and environment.

Apocalypse—From the Greek word for “to unveil that which has been covered” (*apokalypsis*), this term refers to a literary genre in which an otherworldly being reveals the true nature of reality and the future to a human narrator. It also serves as a general description of the biblical judgements and destruction prophesied to befall the Earth in the last days.

Charismatic Christianity—A modern religious movement which, along with the Bible, considers personal experiences with God to be valid sources of revelation and which views the manifestation of spiritual gifts such as healing and speaking in tongues as outwards signs of salvation. Charismatic believers can be found within every denomination while “Pentecostals” are those charismatic believers who have joined denominations which make spiritual gifts a test of faith. Thus all Pentecostals are charismatics, but not all charismatics (those who remain in mainline denominations) are Pentecostals.

Christian Reconstructionism—A religious movement generally considered to have begun in 1973 with the publication of *The Institutes of Biblical Law* by Rousas J. Rushdoony. Beginning with an epistemology of presuppositionalism, it seeks to apply biblical law to all aspects of Christian life (theonomy) in order to build Christ’s kingdom on Earth (postmillennialism). In order to accomplish this, the authorities of the “three spheres”—the family, the church, and the state—must be strictly delineated. Although many secularists have suspected them of conspiring with conservative politicians to establish a theocracy, Reconstructionists envision the dramatic reduction civil government (to roughly 1/10,000th its present size) and tend to view any partnerships as “co-belligerency” rather than cooperative coalitions. Given its postmillennial optimism and suspicion of the secular state, it has tended to promote skepticism toward environmentalism and climate change.

Creation Care—A modern evangelical approach to environmentalism which holds that human-induced ecological degradation constitutes sin, that Christian duty requires believers to be good stewards of the Creation, and that biblical faith is required to fully address the environmental crisis.

Creation Science—A largely evangelical approach to science which became popular in the second half of the twentieth century as it appealed to both the biblical literalism favored by fundamentalists and the presuppositionalism favored by Christian Reconstructionists. Its research stems from a biblical conviction that the universe and complex life appeared suddenly, the Earth's geology is explained by catastrophism (the Flood) rather than uniformitarianism, variation within species is ultimately limited, and humans are utterly distinct from the animal kingdom.

Creationism—The belief that the universe originated from nothing via a supernatural act, with the most well-known account being that of the first chapter of the Book of Genesis. Initially, when challenged by Darwinism, American evangelicals were content to accommodate most aspects of such theories with “gap theory” creationism which allowed for indefinitely long periods between God's creative acts. However, since the 1970s and the rise of creation science, “young earth” creationism has become the most popular origin belief among American evangelicals and asserts that the universe was created in six literal twenty-four hour days roughly six thousand years ago.

Dominionism—The belief (also known as Kingdom Now theology, Manifested Sons, and the Seven Mountains Mandate) that Christians ought to “occupy” positions of political and social leadership within a society in order to establish and extend God's dominion. For Christian Reconstructionists this work relies on the application of biblical law in fulfilling the victory won by Christ at his resurrection while charismatic Christians consider the cultivation of spiritual gifts necessary for carrying out God's final victory over Satan.

Ecotheology—The re-examination of traditional sacred texts and beliefs in the attempt to incorporate the perspective of the Creation into interpretations which had previously only accounted for God and humanity.

End Times Apathy Hypothesis—A term coined by religious studies scholar Robin Globus Veldman describing the popular, but misguided, theory held by many academics and activists that premillennial evangelicals have adopted anti-environmental attitudes based on their belief that they will soon be supernaturally raptured from the planet before it is utterly annihilated in the apocalypse.

Eschatology—The “theology of last things” refers to beliefs pertaining to the ultimate consummation of the universe and the eternal state of the soul.

Evangelicalism—The largest and perhaps most poorly defined religious group in the United States. Within this nebulous group of Protestant Christians, some commonly accepted characteristics include: a reverence for the Bible’s authority along with an individualist ethos which holds that every believer is capable of rightly interpreting it, the necessity of a “born again” salvation experience, a striving toward piety and holy living, the impetus to “evangelize” or share one’s faith with others, and quite often a millennial outlook which adds both urgency and hope to daily life. Although today evangelicals represent the most uniformly anti-environmental religious group in the country, nothing in their theology inherently predisposes them toward such attitudes.

Fundamentalism—A subset of evangelicalism which places such a heavy emphasis on interpreting the Bible literally and maintaining strict doctrinal purity that schism and separatism tend to characterize the movement more often than cooperation and coalition building. Given its affinity for pastoralism and deep suspicion of humanistic progress, surprising overlaps with environmentalism often appear.

Millenarianism—Although often used interchangeably with “millennialism,” this term technically refers to any belief (even non-religious) which holds that the world will suddenly be transformed—often with an emphasis on the need for revolutionary human action as opposed to passively awaiting supernatural intervention.

Millennialism—The Christian belief that an extensive period of peace (typically described as a “thousand-year kingdom”) will exist on Earth just prior to the inauguration of eternity and will, at some point in its duration, witness the second coming of Jesus Christ.

New Earth—Historically, premillennialists have believed that the “new Earth” prophesied in the Bible would be a “redeemed” Earth consisting of the same original matter, purified by fire. Toward the end of the twentieth century, the belief that the second Earth would be entirely new creation following the annihilation of the present Earth began to gain popularity. Historically, the redemption interpretation has generally accompanied greater levels of environmental concern while the annihilation interpretation has generally accompanied less concern.

Pietism—This interpretation of the Bible sees the life of Jesus Christ as the end the Old Testament’s age of the law and the beginning of the New Testament’s age of grace. Thus, in contrast to theonomy and the application of *biblical law*, it promotes holy living and the cultivation of *spiritual virtues* as the believer’s highest duty.

Premillennialism—The original eschatological belief of the early Church which holds that Jesus Christ will return to Earth and rule over a literal thousand-year kingdom. Apocalyptic texts like Revelation depict real events through both symbolic and literalistic language with some interpreters believing that such events had all occurred by 70 CE (preterists) while others believe such events are occurring throughout history (historicists) and still others believe such events await future fulfillment (futurists).

Premillennialism, Dispensational—Although this hermeneutic interprets the entire Bible as an account of the various ages or “dispensations” wherein God has interacted with humanity in differing ways, it is most well-known for its eschatology and in particular its emphasis on the Rapture. As a form of premillennialism, it holds that Israel and the Church are distinct and that all prophecies pertaining to ancient Israel will be fulfilled by the modern political state. Given their conviction that the End Times are drawing near, many dispensationalist prophecy popularizers have written extensively on current trends—especially the dire warnings issued by environmental scientists—which they believe may be connected to various prophecies.

Presuppositionalism—This epistemology proposes that one’s presuppositions inevitably determine the outcomes they will reach. Whereas evangelicals have historically favored Baconian empiricism and worked to reconcile the Bible with observations of the natural world, presuppositionalists reject such apologetics and instead presuppose the existence of God and the veracity of the Bible independent of what any rational investigation of the universe appears to reveal.

Prophecy popularizers—Neither prophets proclaiming original messages from God nor commentators offering scholarly insights into scripture, these modern authors write for the average believer (and even non-believers!) with the intention of bringing the Bible’s End Times message and any connections it might have to current events to a wider audience.

Postmillennialism—Like amillennialism, this Christian eschatological belief holds that Christ is presently reigning, but takes this idea further as believers seek to build the kingdom on Earth through the Christianization of the world. At some point in the future, when this kingdom-building work is complete, Christ will return and inaugurate the end of time. Given this belief in the inevitable perfection of the Earth, postmillennialists have been among the most active promoters of evangelical climate skepticism.

Rapture—The belief—popular among premillennial evangelicals—that all genuine Christians will be supernaturally lifted from the Earth to join with Jesus Christ prior to his second coming. Most believe this public, miraculous event will occur shortly before the seven-year Great Tribulation. Many academics and activists have accused evangelicals of not taking environmentalism seriously due to the seemingly escapist nature of this belief. (See “End Times Apathy Hypothesis.”)

Stewardship—In relation to environmentalism, this biblical concept refers to an outlook whereby humans view themselves as temporarily managing the affairs of Creation with compassion and the understanding that they will ultimately be judged by God for their treatment of the natural world.

Theonomy—This interpretation of the Bible sees no discontinuity between the Old and New Testaments and holds that nearly all biblical laws remain in effect. Thus, in contrast to pietism and cultivation of *spiritual virtues*, it promotes the application of *biblical law* to both personal conduct and civil society as the believer’s highest duty.

Tribulation—Often referred to as the “Great Tribulation,” this refers to the seven-year period of supernatural judgement and destruction which premillennial evangelicals believe will befall the Earth just prior to Jesus Christ’s second coming. It will feature earthquakes, plagues, poisoned rivers and seas, demonic activity, the Antichrist, the Mark of the Beast, and the Battle of Armageddon among many other horrific events. Many evangelicals believe that Christians will be raptured prior to this time, though some believe this will not take place until the middle or end of the Tribulation.

Two Books Theology—The historic evangelical belief that both the Book of Scripture (the Bible) and the Book of Nature (the physical universe) reveal divine truths about God and complement each other as revelatory sources. Such an outlook has tended to encourage an interest in science among evangelicals, especially premillennialists.

GLOSSARY OF KEY FIGURES & ORGANIZATIONS

Beisner, E. Calvin (1955–Present)—Editor of the Coalition on Revival manifestos, founder of the Cornwall Alliance, and one of the most active promoters of climate skepticism among American evangelicals. Beisner, a postmillennialist with Christian Reconstructionist influences, contends that the alleviation of poverty (including access to affordable fossil fuels) rather than the elimination of pollution should be the first step in helping the global poor.

Belz, Joel (1941–Present)—Christian Reconstructionist-inspired founder of *WORLD* magazine.

Burkett, Larry (1939–2003)—Christian Reconstructionist and the “Father of Christian Financial Advising.” An author of fiction as well, his books featured Reconstructionist themes and often centered on conspiracies involving the Environmental Protection Agency.

Chalcedon Foundation (1965–Present)—Established by Rousas Rushdoony in Vallejo, California, the foundation has served as the fountainhead of the Christian Reconstruction movement.

“Chick Tracts” (1960–Present)—A ubiquitous example of the evangelical subculture, over a *billion* of these comic book-style evangelistic tracts have been handed out across the United States since their inception. Along with the Gospel message, they have consistently promoted dispensational premillennialism and from the 1970s to the early 2000s often carried pro-environmental messages—though in recent years they have pivoted toward strident anti-environmentalism.

Chilton, David (1951–1997)—Along with Kenneth Gentry, one of the two leading postmillennial eschatologists of Christian Reconstructionism.

***Christianity Today* (1956–Present)**—Founded by Billy Graham, the magazine has been called the flagship publication of conservative and mainstream evangelicalism.

Cizik, Richard—The former Vice President for Governmental Affairs with the National Association of Evangelicals and one of the chief architects of the Evangelical Climate Initiative.

Coalition on Revival (1989–Present)—An intra-evangelical network founded upon a series of manifestos seeking to apply a biblical worldview to all arenas of society. The

network was a direct attempt at bringing together feuding premillennial dispensationalists and postmillennial reconstructionists for the purpose of social and political activism.

Cornwall Alliance (2000–Present)—A religious environmental organization with postmillennial and Christian Reconstructionist influences which has, since 2005, been the most active promoter of climate skepticism within American evangelicalism.

Cumming, John (1807–1881)—19th-century Scottish preacher whose premillennialist books heavily incorporated the latest findings of scientists and proved enormously popular in both Europe and North America.

Evangelical Climate Initiative (2006–Present)—A collaborative partnership between the National Association of Evangelicals and the Center for Health and the Global Environment at Harvard Medical School, the initiative not only committed evangelical leaders to addressing climate change but also proposed specific legislative policies for doing so. However, following the dismissal of Richard Cizik from the NAE in 2008, the initiative lost most of its support and signaled the end of a unified evangelical environmental movement.

Evangelical Environmental Network (1993–Present)—Founded along with the National Religious Partnership for the Environment in response to pleas from leading scientists for religious organizations to bring their moral weight to bear on the environmental crisis. The network remains the broadest attempt to bring environmental issues and Creation Care ethics to mainstream and conservative evangelicals.

Darby, John Nelson (1800–1882)—The “Father of Dispensationalism.” This nineteenth-century British preacher not only revived premillennialism among evangelicals, but helped to develop the dispensational hermeneutic and popularized the idea of the pre-Tribulation Rapture.

DeMar, Gary (1958–Present)—Christian Reconstructionist and homeschool textbook author who followed Gary North to Tyler, Texas, and assisted him in debating dispensationalists.

Gentry, Kenneth (1950–Present)—Along with David Chilton, one of the two leading postmillennial eschatologists of Christian Reconstructionism.

Graham, Billy (1918–2018)—Ardent premillennialist and one of the most influential religious figures in American history. Founded *Christianity Today*, called the first Lausanne Conference, and published several best-selling prophecy books which promoted environmentalism and the reality of the ecological crisis.

Grimstead, Jay (1935–Present)—Christian Reconstructionist-inspired founder of the Coalition on Revival.

Hunt, Dave (1926–2013)—Premillennialist author whose books opposed Christian Reconstructionism and sought to expose its growing influence among evangelicalism’s charismatic branches.

Institute for Christian Economics (1980s–2000s)—Christian Reconstructionist think tank founded by Gary North and moved to Tyler, Texas, following a falling out with his father-in-law Rousas Rushdoony. Particularly active in publishing from the mid-1980s to the mid-1990s, the institute’s output greatly declined by the early 2000s.

Kirban, Salem (1925s–2010)—Premillennial prophecy popularizer whose works not only sold hundreds of thousands of copies, but carried with them some of the earliest and strongest warnings against pollution and climate change found in any book—secular or religious.

LaHaye, Tim (1926–2016)—Premillennial prophecy popularizer and co-author of the *Left Behind* prophecy fiction series. While his earliest works display a pro-environmental attitude, as he became more closely associated with Reconstructionist influences he adopted an increasingly antagonistic attitude toward environmentalism.

Lindsey, Hal (1929–Present)—Perhaps the best-known premillennial prophecy popularizer. Author of *The Late Great Planet Earth* (1970) and a consistent communicator of the reality of the ecological crisis and climate change in his books up through the late 1990s.

Lausanne Conferences (1974–Present)—Begun in 1974 by Billy Graham, these “once a generation” global conferences tend to promote a premillennial urgency for evangelism and have exerted a reliably pro-environmental influence on American evangelicals as they are brought into contact with leaders from the Global South who testify to the effects of wealth inequality, pollution, and climate change.

Morris, Henry M. (1918–2006)—The “Father of Creation Science,” he and John C. Whitcomb published *The Genesis Flood* (1961) which brought Young Earth Creationism into the evangelical mainstream.

National Association of Evangelicals (1942–Present)—The largest evangelical organization whose membership includes dozens of denominations and millions of

believers. Although the NAE exercises no ecclesiastical authority over churches, it does maintain an active presence in Washington DC lobbying on behalf of evangelicals.

North, Gary (1942–2022)—Christian Reconstructionist founder of the Institute for Christian Economics and son-in-law of Rousas Rushdoony. Well-known for his survivalist ethos, vitriolic writing, and strident promotion of a biblically-based form of libertarianism.

Pride, Mary (1955–Present)—The “Mother of Christian Homeschooling,” her *Big Book of Home Learning* series heavily promoted both Christian Reconstructionism and overtly anti-environmental viewpoints.

Robertson, Pat (1930–2023)—Charismatic televangelist, premillennial prophecy popularizer, and at one point a Reconstructionist-inspired presidential candidate. Much like Tim LaHaye, Robertson’s career reveals the competing influences of premillennialism and postmillennialism. As a young premillennial minister he promoted environmentalism before Reconstructionist-inspired political ambitions led him to oppose such efforts. However, in contrast to LaHaye, by the mid-2000s he had returned to promoting premillennialism and even offered prominent public support for the Evangelical Climate Initiative.

Rushdoony, Rousas J. (1916–2001)—Founder of the Christian Reconstructionist movement (along with its leading think tank, the Chalcedon Foundation) and considered to be the “Father of Christian Homeschooling.” He was heavily influenced by the cornucopian outlook of economist Julian Simon and thus deeply skeptical of the Malthusian claims made by environmental scientists.

Schaeffer, Francis (1912–1984)—Premillennial theologian and author of *Pollution and the Death of Man* (1970), the first major work of evangelical ecotheology. While Schaeffer is widely remembered as the theologian who pushed evangelicals to reject isolationism and seriously engage with culture, he stopped short of the dominionism advocated by Reconstructionists largely on account of his unwavering premillennialism being incompatible with their postmillennial outlook.

Scofield, Cyrus I. (1843–1921)—Evangelical pastor whose annotated *Scofield Reference Bible* (1909) did more to popularize dispensational premillennialism than any other book. In his reference Bible and other works, Scofield promoted a form of gap theory creationism which accommodated, rather than challenged, most of the latest evolutionary findings of his day.

Sider, Ronald J. (1939–2022)—Progressive evangelical activist who challenged wealth inequality and ecologically unsustainable consumerism. His book *Rich Christians in an Age of Hunger* (1977) drew heavy opposition from Christian Reconstructionists.

Smith, Noel (1900–1971)—Editor of the *Baptist Bible Tribune*—one of the leading fundamentalist periodicals—who promoted both premillennialism and pastoralism. Smith epitomized the figure of the hardboiled fundamentalist, yet he consistently displayed a deep respect for plant and animal life—often writing with greater compassion for the Creation than for liberal Christians.

Watt, James G. (1938–2023)—Appointed Secretary of the Interior by Ronald Reagan and pilloried by the press for supposedly being a Rapture-obsessed evangelical willing to exploit the environment. In reality, Watt’s personal theology more closely resembled postmillennialism and he made no mention of the Rapture.

Whitby, Daniel (1638–1726)—Eighteenth-century Anglican clergy who is widely credited with having formulated the theological framework for postmillennialism.

White, Jr., Lynn (1907–1987)—Historian who published “The Historical Roots of Our Ecologic Crisis” (1967) and made the famous argument that the origins of modern environmental crisis lay with religion—in particular, Christianity.

Zondervan (1931–Present)—The leading publisher of premillennial books throughout the twentieth-century until being purchased by HarperCollins of News Corp in 1988. Since losing its independence, it has tended to reprint premillennial titles from its back catalogue and the few new authors it has brought onboard have tended to avoid linking current trends (such as the environmental crisis) to prophecy.

SCRIPTURE INDEX

Genesis

1:1 59, 62, 86-87
 1:2 59, 83, 86-87
 1:28 21, 32, 45, 62, 84, 91,
 102, 109-110, 128, 130,
 151, 154, 198, 253, 267,
 295, 364, 393, 395
 8:22 351
 9:1 198

Exodus

20:15 n96
 30:11-16 n94

Deuteronomy

22:6-7 261
 28 207, 354

Job

38:22-23 254

Psalms

147:17-18 254

Isaiah

18 273
 24:4-6 131, n302
 24:5 145

Jeremiah

50-52 272

Ezekiel

38 272

Daniel

12:11 173

Amos

9:2 n80

9:5-6 254

Habakkuk

3 83

Matthew

9:12 n47

16:3 163

24 n40, 140

24:7 68

Luke

19:13 91

21:25 326

John

3:16 336

Romans

8:19-22 337

8:22 n40

II Corinthians

5:7 n248

I Thessalonians

4:13-18 2

II Peter

3:10-13 n40, 58, 69, 76, 182

Revelation

5 262-263

6 157-158, 182

6:3 143

6:6 253

6:15 76

8 182

8:9 167

8:10-11	161-162	17:5	427
9:1-11	143	20	n44
11:18	252-253	21-22	n40, 182
13	158	22	232-233
16	83, 326	22:20	40
16:1	5		
16:3	161-162		
16:8	253		

INTRODUCTION: THE WINDS HAVE CHANGED

Along a deserted stretch of road, a lone figure waits patiently in the shadows. In the distance appears the headlights of a rapidly approaching car. Timing his leap carefully, he hurls himself onto the briefly illuminated pavement directly in front of the vehicle. The unsuspecting driver, seeing only the glimpse of a figure in his headlights, miraculously swerves—narrowly missing the would-be victim. Slamming on his brakes, the driver rushes back to find a despondent young man beating the pavement and cursing his fate. Carefully shepherding the young man into the safety of the car’s interior, the well-dressed driver suggests that they talk about things over coffee and gently asks what is troubling him. The young man, still shaken from his failed suicide attempt, answers with only two words: “Our environment.”

A short while later, seated in a booth at a local diner, the young man begins to explain his trouble. He is a college student studying ecology and the rapidly multiplying environmental crises have left him hopeless. “It’s too late, mister! It’s *all* over—there’s *no* way out! No escape!” he tells the well-dressed man. The man attempts to reassure him, but the young man cuts him off. He begins to tell of the planet’s troubles—how limited the planet’s available farmland is and how humanity’s population already far exceeds what that land can feed. Mass starvation looms; pandemics will inevitably follow. Farming the oceans is not an option as oil waste contaminates the waters,

pollution kills off crucial oxygen-producing phytoplankton, and mercury renders fish toxic. Not only the oceans, but the atmosphere is also being poisoned as air pollution kills vegetation and riddles human lungs with cancer and other respiratory diseases. This same atmospheric pollution is also raising the planet's temperature—threatening to melt polar caps and flood coastal cities. All of these factors will inevitably destabilize the nations and ignite global war. Any hope of escaping such a future through space colonization is pure fantasy. “We are stuck on this dying planet,” declares the young man.

“Without the Lord, it looks impossible,” replies the well-dressed man. “All this was predicted by the Bible centuries ago.” The young man is skeptical, but listens as the man across from him begins to recite biblical prophecies regarding the world as it nears Judgement Day. “The environment will go crazy,” explains the man before outlining the prophesied events of the final years—a period known as the “Great Tribulation.” The young man begins to tremble as he hears the ancient passages telling of Satan's Antichrist who will drive the nations of Earth to destroy themselves and the planet. The man across the booth from him, an evangelical Christian in suit-and-tie with perfectly coiffed hair, assures him that the dire predictions from his environmental science classes only confirm the Bible's message and validate its prophecies. Upon hearing that the Bible also promises that believers will be physically removed (“raptured”) from Earth prior to the worst disasters, the young man declares that he is convinced and quickly bows his head to accept Jesus Christ as his savior. As the two leave the diner, the once-suicidal young man

declares that he is now spiritually ready to face a world of environmental decay: “Even with everything caving in, I have *peace!*”¹

These dramatic scenes, depicted in the 1971 evangelistic tract *The Great Escape*, summarize well the general feeling conservative evangelicals initially had toward environmental scientists and their warnings of a rapidly intensifying ecological crisis. Science offered knowledge, the Bible hope, and evangelicals trusted both. In accordance with their long tradition of “Two Books” theology whereby both Scripture and Nature revealed truths about God, evangelicals often appreciated the revelatory work of scientists and took their reports on Nature’s degradation seriously.² In their eyes, irreversibly polluting the environment was akin to tearing pages out of the Bible. When leading environmentalists warned that it was already too late—that civilization had already passed several ecological points-of-no-return and sealed its fate—evangelicals took that message to heart. It was only when scientists declared that there was no hope that evangelicals took exception. For evangelicals, such apocalyptic declarations only made sense in light of their prophetic frameworks—prophecies which to outsiders often appeared fatalistic and otherworldly but which brought hope and clarity to millions of Bible-believing Americans trying to make sense of the dire here-and-now.

¹ Jack T. Chick, *The Great Escape*, (Rancho Cucamonga, CA: Chick Publications, 1971).

² See Kenneth J. Howell, *God’s Two Books: Copernican Cosmology and Biblical Interpretation in Early Modern Science* (Notre Dame, IN: Notre Dame Press, 2004); John Polkinghorne, “Christianity and Science,” Philip Clayton and Zachary Simpson, eds., *The Oxford Handbook of Religion and Science* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2008): 57-70.

Produced by fundamentalist illustrator Jack T. Chick, *The Great Escape* and other “Chick Tracts” presented the Gospel in cartoon form. These presentations often ended with a premillennial dispensationalist (the most popular form of 20th-century evangelical eschatology) warning that the reader should not hesitate in making their decision because the end was very near. Since the 1960s, evangelicals have distributed over a *billion* of Chick’s tracts, making them a ubiquitous part of the American evangelical subculture. As one of the most popular titles, *The Great Escape* went through three printings: in 1971 and 1972 after the initial Earth Day event and again in 1991 after its 20th anniversary. This tract was not unique in its theme of taking scientists’ environmental warnings seriously while finding hope in God. In another tract from the 1970s, a reporter asks: “Can science save us from deadly pollution, population explosion and energy shortages?” A science professor confidently replies that of course scientists can solve such problems—if given enough funding and “anywhere from twenty to three hundred years.” This is immediately followed by a stark white page featuring a somber message. Devoid of any illustrations which might distract from its somber words, it tells the reader that people are breaking down psychologically as global unrest, “along with massive famines on the horizon, just becomes too much for many people.” Again the message is clear: science informs us of overwhelming environmental threats and the Bible provides the spiritual strength for facing such challenges.³

³ Jack T. Chick, *The Mad Machine*, (Rancho Cucamonga, CA: Chick Publications, 1975).

It was this ability by premillennialists to incorporate the latest findings from environmental scientists into their prophetic framework that led historian Paul Boyer to issue a prediction of his own. In 1992, Boyer concluded his book *When Time Shall Be No More*—still to date the most thorough and sensitive treatment of premillennialism and the American subculture that sprang up around it over the second half of the twentieth century—by considering environmentalism. Whereas for more than four decades prophecy popularizes had made threats of Communism and nuclear war the centerpieces of their sermons, books, and tapes, by the 1990s such apocalyptic boogeymen appeared to be fading along with the Cold War that had birthed them. In his final analysis, Boyer made his case that modern ecological concerns and fighting pollution would soon come to dominate the concerns of premillennialists:

Another ancient apocalyptic theme is assuming new prominence as the twentieth century winds down: the decay of the environment. The surge of concern about nuclear accidents, oil spills, global warming, the greenhouse effect, vanishing rain forests, and a host of other environmental issues strikes many prophecy writers as highly suggestive in view of the environmental motifs in biblical apocalyptic. The Book of Revelation, they point out, unfolds the ultimate ecological catastrophe as...the oceans and rivers become "as the blood of a dead man," killing all sea creatures and poisoning the world's water supply; earthquakes tumble mountains into the sea, and giant hailstones pound the earth.⁴

It was this newer, greener reading of Revelation's prophecies—one which combined "warnings of ecological catastrophe and visions of a globe restored to Edenic purity"—

⁴ Paul Boyer, *When Time Shall Be No More: Prophecy Belief in Modern American Culture* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1992), 331.

which Boyer predicted would ultimately be “capable of sustaining prophecy belief far into the twenty-first century.”⁵

While a syncretic approach to science and the Bible would sustain evangelicals up to the turn of the millennium, by 2012 Boyer had passed away and Chick had published a new tract which signaled that the mood within evangelicalism had shifted considerably. In sharp contrast to the comfort of that roadside diner where an ecologically-sensitive, Bible-believing Christian had shared both the sorrow of a dying planet and the hope of prophecy, a new scene emerged in the tract *Global Warming*. Now the tract opened with the face of a demonic Al Gore filling a television screen and shouting, “*It’s coming! You had your chance. We warned you, but you ignored us! Now you will pay the price, because you caused it!*” Whereas *The Great Escape* had seamlessly integrated scientific data and forecasts with Biblical prophecy, *Global Warming* now challenged the reliability and motives of such scientists:

Brilliant scientists graciously counsel us ‘little people’ on climate changes and the coming dangers of global warming. Are they right? Is Mother Earth doomed because of us? They must be right, because they’re ‘*scientists!*’ Hmm...But wait! Let’s think about this.⁶

In the eye of Chick and his millions of evangelical readers, environmental scientists now appeared suspicious and radically anti-Christian. In rapid succession the

⁵ Boyer, *When Time Shall Be No More*, 337.

⁶ Jack T. Chick, *Global Warming*, (Rancho Cucamonga, CA: Chick Publications, 2012).

tract then paraded the failed predictions of environmental scientists like Paul Ehrlich, Bernt Balchen, David Viner, and Michael Oppenheimer—all experts whom evangelical prophecy writers had leaned heavily on since the 1970s. In fact, *Global Warming* argued that the *real* signs of the end times were not climate change, pollution, or famine, but the paganism practiced by many climate scientists and activists (such as worshipping the goddesses Ixchel and Gaia). A panel of cartoon environmentalists smugly declared to the reader that the one thing they all have in common is that “*none* of us believe your Bible.” In true Chick fashion the tract presented the Gospel alongside a premillennial dispensationalist warning—though it was careful when describing the fiery judgements to emphasize that “man won’t cause *this* global warming!” Its final scene ended not with a troubled soul finding peace, but with the drawing of clear battle lines between evangelicals and ecology: “Jesus is calling the shots...*not* the environmentalists!”⁷

Clearly something has changed. Today evangelicals are more likely to doubt claims of human-caused climate change and more likely to oppose policies aimed at protecting the environment than any other religious group.⁸ Whereas up until 1991 (the third and final printing of *The Great Escape*) even the most conservative and literalistic fundamentalists like Chick were warning of catastrophic climate change due to air pollution, by 2014 the Pew Research Center could find little trace of such attitudes in its survey of U.S. evangelicals. Instead they found only 28% believed that climate change

⁷ Chick, *Global Warming*.

⁸ Defining “evangelicals” is a notoriously difficult task and will be discussed in greater detail in the next chapter; Mormons appear to be similarly skeptical and oppositional, though reliable polling data which accounts for Mormonism is scarce.

was occurring due to human activity (by far the lowest of all religious groups), with 33% attributing any climatic variations to natural phenomena and 37% flatly denying that such changes were occurring at all.⁹ Pew also found that evangelical support for environmental regulation had fallen from 54% to 45% since 2007.¹⁰ Considering that intra-evangelical polling in 2006 found roughly 75% of evangelicals “tend to support environmental issues,” the precipitous decline from the 2000s to the 2010s is even more stark.¹¹ More recent polling has shown little change in such attitudes, though a 2020 Climate Nexus poll found that the percent of evangelicals willing to attribute climate change to human activity had increased from 28% to 44%. However, this growth appears to have come almost entirely from that segment which saw climate change as a natural fluctuation given that the number of skeptical evangelicals remained consistent at 37%.¹² Considering this data in light of *The Great Escape*’s diner conversation, we must ask: why did evangelicals abandon their initial receptiveness to environmentalism and how did their apocalyptic style of ecology transform into political antagonism?

⁹ “Religion and Science,” Pew Research Center, October 22, 2015, <https://www.pewresearch.org/science/2015/10/22/science-and-religion/>.

¹⁰ “U.S. Public Becoming Less Religious,” Pew Research Center, November 3, 2015, <https://www.pewresearch.org/religion/2015/11/03/u-s-public-becoming-less-religious/>. The only religious group offering less support for environmental regulations than evangelical Protestants were Mormons at 43%.

¹¹ “Nationwide Study Shows Concerns of Evangelical Christians over Global Warming,” Ellison Research, February 2, 2006, https://web.archive.org/web/20061010210001/http://evangelicalclimateinitiative.org:80/pub/polling_report.pdf.

¹² “National Poll Toplines,” Climate Nexus, October 13, 2020, <https://climatenexus.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/IPL-National-Climate-Change-Poll.pdf>.

Christianity: The Root of the Crisis?

Until now, few scholars have examined such questions and thus early evangelical concern for the natural world and initial support of environmentalism—especially within its most conservative and apocalyptic branches—remains a largely untold story. Instead, for the last half century debate has centered on whether Christianity *itself* is compatible with environmentalism and an ecologically sustainable world. This debate began in earnest in 1967 when medieval historian Lynn White Jr. (himself the son of a Presbyterian minister) declared Christianity to be “the most anthropocentric religion the world had seen.” In White’s interpretation of European history, the spread of Christianity had uprooted the restraining influence of pagan animism and replaced it with the dualistic view of humans and nature that made technology and modern industrial society possible. This monotheism meant that the sacred which had been imminent in nature became transcendent and this separate-from-nature God mandated that ruling-over-nature humans exploit their environment for their own purposes. Thus, he charged, Christianity “bears a huge burden of guilt” for modernity’s ecological crisis.¹³

The response to White’s argument was explosive. Reprinted in numerous academic and popular publications, it quickly became a touchstone argument in multiple fields. Theologians in particular spilled plenty of ink rebutting and reflecting upon the idea that their faith might be responsible for the dying planet. As the 1970s began, sociologist Jeffrey K. Hadden saw such attempts to work out theological responses to the

¹³ Lynn White Jr., “The Historical Roots of Our Ecologic Crisis,” *Science* 155, no. 3767 (March 10, 1967), 1204.

ecological crisis—along with other social issues such as race, feminism, war, and poverty—as potentially leading to the next great “crisis” in American Protestantism. Hadden saw storm clouds brewing between a “new breed” of activist clergy who were beginning to see social engagement as one of the church’s primary theological responsibilities and the laity who primarily viewed the church as a source of psychological comfort and even a shelter from a rapidly changing society.¹⁴

By the middle of the 1970s, however, the threat of crisis had passed as churches remained more committed to their conservative duties meeting the psychological and salvational needs of congregants. Still, sociologists like Harold E. Quinley continued to express confidence that liberal Protestantism would emerge as a positive social force given that its “highly secular” perspective aligned better with the faith’s “prophetic, socially active tradition” than the “otherworldly emphasis” of more conservative branches. Much like Hadden’s prediction of a coming schism, Quinley foresaw this rejection of otherworldliness as the key to future Protestant political power—a future “likely to be influenced more by liberal clergymen than by conservatives.”¹⁵

Academic Interpretations: Sociologists and Conflicting Data

By the middle of the 1980s, such a future dominated by liberal clergy had failed to materialize. Instead, the conservative Moral Majority was flexing its influence, Ronald

¹⁴ Jeffrey K. Hadden, *The Gathering Storm in the Churches* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Company, 1969), 6.

¹⁵ Harold E. Quinley, *The Prophetic Clergy: Social Activism Among Protestant Ministers* (New York, NY: John Wiley & Sons, 1974), 20, 40.

Reagan was running for reelection, and sociologists were beginning to take seriously the potential political consequences of White's thesis. As the election of 1984 neared, one of the first empirical studies testing White's argument appeared in the journal *Social Forces*. Sociologists Carl M. Hand and Kent D. Van Liere used survey data from Washington residents to test whether those who held a Judeo-Christian worldview were more likely to also possess a "mastery-over-nature orientation" and found a positive correlation between the two. Yet this correlation was uneven and varied widely depending upon denomination. The more apocalyptically-minded Baptists and Mormons scored lower on environmental concern than the more progressive Episcopalians and Methodists. Hand and Van Liere warned that the growing influence of fundamentalist Christians could have "real consequences for the progress of environmental reform."¹⁶

Subsequent studies quickly complicated Hand and Van Liere's apparent confirmation of the White thesis. Ronald Shaiko found that White's dichotomy of Christian "mastery over nature" versus pagan "unity with nature" erased a surprisingly popular middle ground: *stewardship of nature*. Not only was stewardship already a powerful motivating force among Christian environmentalists, but Shaiko argued that it appeared as a "much more plausible" solution given the Judeo-Christian roots of the American social and political systems for promoting broad environmental concern than White's call for Eastern and mystical religious transformation. The pendulum began to swing back toward White when Douglas Eckberg and T. Jean Blocker found "firm

¹⁶ Carl M. Hand and Kent D. Van Liere, "Religion, Mastery-Over-Nature, and Environmental Concern," *Social Forces* 63, no. 2 (December 1, 1984), 568.

support” that belief in the Bible (“and only belief in the Bible”) could predict respondent scores on a variety of environmental concern indexes. This effect was never very strong, but it was consistent enough for them to conclude that “biblical literalism” and the “dominion-over-nature orientation” were effectively the same. Ignoring Shaiko’s stewardship model, Eckberg and Blocker affirmed secular environmentalists’ concern that conservative evangelicals’ “otherworldly” emphasis would only “divert attention from here-and-now issues.”¹⁷

Scholarly interest in the ecological consequences of theology only intensified in the 1990s, though studies continued to produce mixed results. The decade began with more findings in favor of White’s thesis as Andrew Greeley confirmed Eckberg and Blocker’s findings that biblical literalism strongly correlates with an aversion to spend money on the environment. However, Greeley cautioned that biblical literalism alone did not provide a satisfactory explanatory model and instead depended on the “imaginative contents and on the political and ethical correlations” of each individual’s interpretation.¹⁸ Later that same year, a team led by James Guth also found data indicating that religious belief has a “clear effect” on environmental attitudes. Guth’s team found that the more conservative Christian denominations—those emphasizing biblical literalism and End

¹⁷ Ronald Shaiko, “Religion, Politics, and Environmental Concern: A Powerful Mix of Passions,” *Social Science Quarterly* 68, no. 2 (June, 1987), 258; Douglas Lee Eckberg and T. Jean Blocker, “Varieties of Religious Involvement and Environmental Concerns: Testing the Lynn White Thesis,” *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 28, no. 4 (December, 1989), 516.

¹⁸ Andrew Greeley, “Religion and Attitudes toward the Environment,” *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 32, no.1 (March, 1993), 27.

Times belief—placed less emphasis on environmentalism, while liberal denominations expressed more support.¹⁹

However, other sociologists quickly complicated these findings. Conrad Kanagy and Fern Willits found that when more refined indexes of environmental concern (in this case the New Environmental Paradigm) were applied as control variables, the net effect of church attendance became significant and positive. They faulted earlier studies for overweighting the attitudes and values associated with modern secular environmentalists as indicators of pro-environmental behavior. Their data suggested that many Christians might not identify with the accepted indicators of environmental concern, yet their behavior still reflects a genuine concern for environmental degradation.²⁰ Eric Woodrum and Thomas Hoban furthered the divide over White when their survey data found that dominion-over-nature attitudes were in fact prevalent among Christians, but that belief in the “validity of Genesis” (biblical literalism) was not a reliable indicator of such attitudes. Furthermore, they found no evidence that religious institutions were a significant factor in individuals adopting anti-environmental attitudes or behaviors. They concluded by encouraging researchers to be “dubious about deducing dominion beliefs from traditional theological belief.”²¹

¹⁹ Guth, et al., “Theological Perspectives and Environmentalism among Religious Activists,” *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 32, no. 4 (December, 1993), 381.

²⁰ Conrad L. Kanagy and Fern K. Willits, “A Greening of Religion: Some Evidence from a Pennsylvania Sample,” *Social Science Quarterly* 74, no. 3 (1993), 681-682.

²¹ Eric Woodrum and Thomas Hoban, “Theology and Religiosity Effects on Environmentalism,” *Review of Religious Research* 35, no. 3 (March, 1994), 202-204. Woodrum and Hoban also gave support to Shaiko’s pitch for encouraging Christian stewardship over White’s call for embracing Eastern mysticism.

As the millennium approached, sociologists remained determined to gain clarity on the ecological effects of Christianity. A second Guth-led study looked at Christianity broadly while paying special attention to evangelicals and their End Times beliefs. Once again religion had a strong effect, but linking attitudes toward nature to specific beliefs proved difficult—with the exception of dispensationalism. This particular belief appeared to condition evangelicals “against active concern with environment policies” so effectively that they noted “the better the measure we have of this theology, the stronger the correlations with environmental attitudes.”²² Eckberg and Blocker also returned with a study showing Christianity as producing a generally pro-environmental effect with any negative effects largely confined to “fundamentalism” and its accompanying biblical literalism.²³

However, Woodrum and Hoban soon joined Michelle Wolkomir in a pair of studies which again called such conclusions into question. The first study revealed that biblical literalism had “no independent relationship to environmental concern” and, provided dominion belief was controlled for, religiosity produced a net positive effect. The second, a nationwide sample of six denominational subcultures, considered White’s claim that dominion beliefs correlate to low levels of environment concern and found that “in no cases are the hypotheses supported.” They concluded that individual’s

²² James L. Guth, et al., "Faith and the Environment: Religious Beliefs and Attitudes on Environmental Policy," *American Journal of Political Science* 39, no. 2 (May, 1995), 377.

²³ Douglas L. Eckberg and T. Jean Blocker, "Christianity, Environmentalism, and the Theoretical Problem of Fundamentalism," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 35, no. 4 (December, 1996), 343.

demographic characteristics were more likely to influence their attitude toward environmentalism than their denomination's beliefs.²⁴ Such contradictory findings led Kanagy and his partner to declare after surveying the rapidly-accumulating literature that "empirical support for [White's] hypothesis has been less than overwhelming." Narrowing the focus to those already engaged in environmental activism produced more confounding results:

...when we utilized what we believe is the most explicit and clear indicator of environmental concern—identification as an environmentalist—we found that none of the religiousness variables predicted such identification. Religious individuals were no less likely than nonreligious persons to claim to be environmentalists. These findings in particular fail to support the White hypothesis and suggest that those of Judeo-Christian traditions—even *fundamentalist individuals* [emphasis added]—are no less likely to be concerned about the environment."²⁵

The arrival of a new millennium did little to clarify for sociologists what effects Christianity or its millennialism might have on environmental attitudes. For every study claiming a clear correlation between conservative theology and opposition to environmentalism there appeared two cautioning against drawing such conclusions.²⁶ Heather Boyd found the predictive reliability of Christian beliefs for environmental

²⁴ Michelle Wolkomir, et al., "Substantive Religious Belief and Environmentalism," *Social Science Quarterly* 78, no. 1 (March 1997), 106; Michelle Wolkomir, et al., "Denominational Subcultures of Environmentalism," *Review of Religious Research* 38, no. 4 (June, 1997), 325.

²⁵ Conrad L. Kanagy and Hart M. Nelsen, "Religion and Environmental Concern: Challenging the Dominant Assumptions," *Review of Religious Research* 37, no. 1 (September, 1995): 34, 43;

²⁶ Nalini Tarakeshwar, et al., "The Sanctification of Nature and Theological Conservatism: A Study of Opposing Religious Correlates of Environmentalism," *Review of Religious Research* 42, no. 4 (June, 2001), 387.

support to be “rather low,” with prayer only slightly correlated to positive support and fundamentalism to diminished support.²⁷ Darren Sherkat and Christopher Ellison reached a similar conclusion, though they recognized that the need for diverse allies in addressing the ecological crises meant that even fundamentalists might have a role to play. They reasoned that local conservative evangelical congregations “may not provide a strong ideological foundation for mobilization to protect the environment, but they may play an important role in mobilization to protect specific natural settings.”²⁸ Anders Biel and Andreas Nilsson recognized the important role historians could play in understanding the motivations behind Christian environmental attitudes. They warned that drawing conclusive links between religious beliefs and environmentalism would always be subject to “variations within the population at a specific moment in time” and therefore the White thesis “does not lend itself to a proper test.”²⁹ Thus, historicization and an account of evangelicals’ shifting views on environmentalism was necessary.

²⁷ Heather Hartwig Boyd, “Christianity and the Environment in the American Public,” *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 38, no. 1 (March, 1999), 43; Paul Djupe and Patrick Hunt came to a similar conclusion which “casts doubt on explanations in the literature that rely heavily on religious belief.” Paul A. Djupe and Patrick Kieran Hunt, “Beyond the Lynn White Thesis: Congregational Effects on Environmental Concern,” *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 48, no. 4 (December, 2009), 682; Boyd did not examine end-times beliefs and few studies since 2000 have done so either. David C. Barker and David H. Bearce did sample roughly 700 people for a 2013 survey exploring how end-times beliefs correlated to environmental attitudes and found that such believers appear to have a shorter “sociotropic time horizon.” This meant that the apocalyptically-minded “think a little bit like actuaries...they calculate that the planetary life expectancy will be much shorter than do nonbelievers.” David C. Barker and David H. Bearce, “End-Times Theology, the Shadow of the Future, and Public Resistance to Addressing Global Climate Change,” *Political Research Quarterly* 66, no. 2 (June, 2013), 269.

²⁸ Darren E. Sherkat and Christopher G. Ellison, “Structuring the Religion-Environment Connection: Identifying Religious Influences on Environmental Concern and Activism,” *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 46, no. 1 (March, 2007), 71, 82.

²⁹ Anders Biel and Andreas Nilsson, “Religious Values and Environmental Concern: Harmony and Detachment,” *Social Science Quarterly* 86, no. 1 (March, 2005), 190.

Academic Interpretations: Historians and the “Moral Minority”

Amidst the sociologists’ conflicting findings, the first serious historical account of Protestant environmentalism arrived in 1995 and attempted to offer some explanation for why data collected at different times and in different places produced such varied conclusions. In *The Greening of Protestant Thought*, historian Robert Fowler traced a straightforward chronology in which Christianity had reached a consensus by 1970 on the importance of God’s Creation and, aside from a general lull in the mid-1980s, rescuing that Creation from human spoiling had been a surging concern for believers ever since. Christian environmentalism was so widespread that Fowler declared the popular perception that organized religion did not take the environment seriously to be “just plain wrong.” The only reason such a misperception existed in the first place was due to secular environmentalists who had “simply ignored Protestant concern with the ecological crisis.” The only exception he found were fundamentalists and other premillennial evangelicals whom he noted appeared more interested in the End Times than the environment.³⁰ Had Fowler examined the themes of their apocalyptic literature, he would have been surprised to learn just how extensively the two often overlapped.

The first—and still to date most extensive—history devoted specifically to evangelical environmentalism remains David Larsen’s 2001 dissertation *God’s Gardeners*. From White’s initial challenge in 1967 to the turn of the millennium, Larsen

³⁰ Robert Booth Fowler, *The Greening of Protestant Thought* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1995), 1-2, 45.

found that far from being environmental antagonists, “mainstream evangelical leaders proved surprisingly receptive to the claims of environmentalism.” Unlike Fowler, he did not interpret the popular misrepresentation as an intentional slight by secular environmentalists but as a result of outsiders assuming that an “evangelical minority of anti-environmental minimizers and otherworldly apocalypticists” spoke for the movement. Written just a few years after the formation of the Evangelicalism Environmental Network and its stunning success in defeating congressional attempts to weaken the Endangered Species Act in 1994, Larsen’s account reflects the optimistic and even triumphalist mood of a movement that appeared poised to take a leading role in American environmentalism.³¹

The opening years of the new millennium appeared to confirm this optimism. By 2006, evangelicals appeared to be on the cusp of galvanizing their own politically-oriented (and heavily publicized) environmental effort with the Evangelical Climate Initiative—a collaborative project led by the National Association of Evangelicals, the Evangelical Environmental Network, and the Harvard Medical School’s Center for Health and the Global Environment. However, soon controversy and outside pressure forced the NAE to largely abandon its leadership role in the ECI and the once-promising effort to mobilize green evangelicals quickly founded.

The apparent failure of such efforts to gain broad evangelical support gave historians reason to doubt that environmentalism was ever more than the concern of a

³¹ David Larsen, “God’s Gardeners: American Protestant Evangelicals Confront Environmentalism, 1967-2000,” (Ph.D. diss., University of Chicago, 2001), 4-5.

“moral minority.” Taking this phrase as his title, David Swartz argued that social and global concerns such as environmentalism were present within evangelicalism, but were almost entirely the domain of its smaller liberal branch. Organized by men like Ron Sider in the 1970s, this loose collective “stood for antiwar, civil rights, anti-consumer, communal, New Left, and third-world principles, even as they stressed doctrinal and sexual fidelity.” However, their nascent efforts were ultimately left stranded in the 1980s as the religious right seized political influence and secular progressive coalitions grew increasingly cold toward religion in general.³²

At the same time as Swartz, Katharine Wilkinson was writing about another eco-minority within evangelicalism: a small cadre of concerned leaders and scholars. Picking up where Swartz’s account left off, Wilkinson observed that until the mid-1990s environmentalism had been “confined to the left wing of evangelicalism” but that mainstream leadership worked over the following decade to bring “Creation Care” to the cusp of widespread acceptance. However, while this leadership would struggle to navigate opposition from the evangelical Right, Wilkinson argued that it was ultimately scientific skepticism, increasing political partisanship, and an inability to think in terms of structures rather than individuals that prevented lay evangelicals from taking up Creation Care. Importantly though, she observed evangelicalism’s ill fit within the present two-party system. Evangelicals’ values have never aligned cleanly with either party, meaning that their recent marriage to the GOP was “not predestined or eternal” and

³² David R. Swartz, *Moral Minority: The Evangelical Left in an Age of Conservatism* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012), 3, 6.

that these believers had the potential to craft their own unique style of environmentalism.³³

More recently, Melanie Gish—a self-described “non-evangelical, non-environmentalist, non-American”—has published her own account of Creation Care’s rise and fall based on extensive interviews she conducted with the ECI’s leadership from 2009 to 2010. Like Wilkinson, she took up the question asked by NPR host Gregory Warner: “[In 2008], it could really seem like Christians would be ready not only to sign on to the environmental movement but even take the lead. So what happened?” According to Gish, Creation Care leaders always faced a Sisyphean task as she likened evangelicalism and environmentalism to oil and water—destined to be “unstable in the long run.” She praised these leaders (and is gracious toward their opponents) though for managing to carve out a small, “in-between-but-still-within” organizational niche allowing them to keep a foot in both worlds. There are no illusions here of that niche becoming mainstream as, again like Wilkinson, Gish sees green-minded believers as “misfits indeed in an increasingly polarized two-party system and corresponding cultural climate of antagonism.”³⁴

In the most recent account of the movement, historian Neall W. Pogue sees its demise less as an inevitable tragedy and more as “a story of missed opportunities.” Where

³³ Katharine K. Wilkinson, *Between God and Green: How Evangelicals are Cultivating a Middle Ground on Climate Change* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2012), 3, 15, 20.

³⁴ Melanie Gish, *God’s Wounded World: American Evangelicalism and the Challenge of Environmentalism* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2020), ix, 3-4; National Public Radio, “What Would Jesus Drive?” *Rough Translation*, July 24, 2019.

Gish found evangelicalism and environmentalism as fundamentally incompatible, Pogue finds that from the 1970s to the 1990s, evangelicals expressed a surprising receptivity to such issues “fueled by underlying eco-friendly philosophies” such as Christian stewardship already present in their faith and doctrine.³⁵ Pogue’s *The Nature of the Religious Right* frames evangelicals’ relationship to environmentalism within the broader context of the culture wars rather than in terms of religion’s relationship to science. In it he argues that evangelical participation in Earth Day and other forms of green activism initially avoided the polarization that accompanied civil rights, feminism, gay rights, and abortion, but missed its opportunity to coalesce as a conservative movement when Billy Graham chose to avoid the issue in the early 1970s. Eco-friendliness would remain tolerable within evangelicalism until the early 1990s when leaders of the Religious Right such as Jerry Falwell—now favored by the GOP and informed by libertarian think tanks—“cherry-picked” politically-convenient doctrines and deployed tactics of fear and ridicule against those who appeared poised to break rank with the rapidly solidifying anti-environmental consensus.³⁶

However, given that Pogue locates that the pivotal events of this history in the 1970s and 1990s, his book covers relatively little ground beyond what had been staked out by Larsen’s dissertation two decades earlier. Aside from a few “quiet challenges” in the years since the turn of the millennium, *The Nature of the Religious Right* presents

³⁵ Neall W. Pogue, *The Nature of the Religious Right: The Struggle Between Conservative Evangelicals and the Environmental Movement* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2022), 2.

³⁶ Pogue, *The Nature of the Religious Right*, 7.

conservative evangelical environmentalism as a story which ended well before the arrival of the ECI. Pogue does rightly challenge the traditional interpretation that premillennialism fostered an anti-environmental style of fatalism, but he does so by downplaying the influence of *any* theology on believers aside from gendered notions of the family. In his account, intimidating elites, not specific beliefs, have dictated the course of evangelical environmentalism.

Activistic Interpretations: The End-Times Apathy Hypothesis

In contrast to the tentative and often conflicting interpretations of academics, environmental activists have, since the early 1980s, maintained a highly-publicized conviction that conservative evangelical theology and its accompanying politics are utterly incompatible with ecological concern. While some activists prior to that time had maintained a guarded suspicion of Christianity's ability (and willingness) to synthesize the anthropocentric "dominion mandate" of Genesis 1:28 with pressing ecological concerns, many had been willing to work alongside even the most conservative fundamentalists who took their message seriously. The changing political landscape of the decade, however, soon drove a wedge between what had been two amiable factions. Emerging on the national political stage at roughly the same time, the evangelical "Moral Majority" and the secular environmental "Group of Ten" staked out opposing positions in relation to the newly-elected administration of President Ronald Reagan. Flexing their

new-found political muscles, evangelicals claimed credit for putting Reagan in the White House while environmentalists vowed to combat his agenda.

Unlike earlier environmentalists, organizations like the Sierra Club and the Audubon Society were not concerned that the president was beholden to a domineering vision of the Bible's first book, but rather the doomsday vision of its final book. As Reagan actively courted evangelicals, environmentalists feared that the man in charge of the nation's nuclear arsenal was also internalizing their premillennial beliefs regarding the destruction of the planet. Following the tremendous sales of premillennial books like Hal Lindsey's *The Late Great Planet Earth* in the 1970s, references to "Armageddon" by the Reagan so unnerved groups that petitions began to circulate demanding the president disavow belief in the literal fulfillment of prophecy.³⁷

On the domestic front, these groups similarly attacked Reagan's Secretary of the Interior, James Watt, as an apocalypticist entrusted with the keys to the nation's natural resources. In 1981, at the end of what had been a lighthearted exchange with a congressional committee, Watt had mentioned that he did not know how many generations might remain until Christ returned but reasoned that it could be thousands of years and thus humans should "manage with skill" to ensure that future generations have the resources they will need. The press selectively truncated Watt's testimony and soon environmentalist publications were depicting the secretary (and, by extension, the President and evangelicals broadly) as an end-time fanatic bent on bleeding the Earth dry

³⁷ Joe Cuomo, "Ronald Reagan and the Prophecy of Armageddon," *Christic Institute* (October, 1984).

in preparation for Judgement Day. Since then such depictions have continued to pass directly from activist organizations to politicians, the public, and even environmental history textbooks.³⁸ Religious studies scholar Robin Globus Veldman has identified these decontextualized words by Watt as the origin of what she calls the “End Times Apathy Hypothesis”—the popular interpretation of evangelicalism as a movement apocalyptically predisposed toward anti-environmentalism.³⁹ Such fears made for good headlines (and fundraising pitches), but in reality both Reagan and Watt regularly promoted optimistic narratives of American exceptionalism more in line with postmillennialism (the eschatology which had long fueled notions of Manifest Destiny) than premillennialism.

Veldman’s use of “apathy” is quite gracious in comparison to the journalists and activists who saw end-times beliefs as encouraging aggressive antipathy toward the Earth. One of the loudest voices promoting the narrative of evangelical end-times antipathy was the controversial journalist Grace Halsell. In her 1986 book *Prophecy and Politics*, Halsell claimed to have proof that millions of premillennial dispensationalists were actively working and praying for the destruction of the planet. She linked these beliefs directly to Reagan and told readers that those under the spell of premillennialism were convinced “that we must destroy Planet Earth, annihilating ourselves, our beautiful

³⁸ Historian Carolyn Merchant quotes directly from David Helvarg’s *The War Against the Greens* (San Francisco, CA: Sierra Club Books, 1994) when relaying Watt’s excerpted congressional testimony and its implications in her textbook *American Environmental History: An Introduction* (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 2002), 199.

³⁹ Robin Globus Veldman, *The Gospel of Climate Skepticism: Why Evangelical Christians Oppose Action on Climate Change* (Oakland, CA: University of California Press, 2019), 28.

trees, flowers...so that there will remain nothing of the past.”⁴⁰ Thirteen years later, Halsell remained committed to exposing what she called “the fastest growing cult in America.” In *Forcing God’s Hand*, she repeated religious broadcaster Dale Crowley Jr.’s warning that premillennialists “have one goal: to facilitate God’s hand to waft them up to heaven free from all trouble, from where they will watch Armageddon and the destruction of Planet Earth.” In order to facilitate this divine plan, Halsell reported on fanatical dispensationalists who were seizing control of conservative and Charismatic denominations and wielding political influence to increasingly agitate for violence in the Middle East.⁴¹

By the early 1990s, concerns over end-times environmental apathy had reached the highest halls of power in the nation’s capital. In 1992, Vice President Al Gore—a Southern Baptist himself—published his influential ecological text *Earth In The Balance* and peppered his call to action with sharp criticisms of those he viewed as apathetic premillennialists. Beginning with Watt’s infamous testimony, he called the secretary’s supposed view “heretical” and an “appallingly self-fulfilling prophecy of doom.” In the wake of Reagan and his appointees, Gore found it unforgivable that some Christians would deploy eschatology “as an excuse for abdicating their responsibility to be good stewards of God’s creation.” However, beyond these specific doctrines, Gore did see

⁴⁰ Grace Halsell, *Prophecy and Politics: Militant Evangelicals on the Road to Nuclear War* (Westport, CT: Lawrence Hill & Company, 1986), 5.

⁴¹ Grace Halsell, *Forcing God’s Hand: Why Millions Pray for a Quick Rapture—And Destruction of Planet Earth* (Washington, DC: Crossroads International Publishers, 1999), 5. In reality, premillennialism’s influence over the leadership of the religious right by that point had been in decline since its high point in 1988.

climate change as an apocalyptic threat that was quickly dwarfing the capacities of both secular science and existing religions. Thus he sympathized with men like Teilhard de Chardin and James Lovelock who argued for the creation of a new kind of religion capable of avoiding fatalism and offering a comprehensive ethic of stewardship.⁴²

As the new millennium dawned, suspicions of anti-environmental premillennialists took on darker and more conspiratorial overtones. Greenpeace activist Jeremy Leggett reported how such beliefs had made the leap to the corporate world of the oil industry. While attending a climate conference in Geneva, Leggett found himself interviewing a member of the Ford Motor Company's Emissions Control Planning staff. The representative began with a remark that the Earth was only ten thousand years old before confessing that "the more I look, the more it is just as it says in the Bible." The biblical record testified to both the planet's origin and the rapidly intensifying "ecological degradation" that would culminate in its destruction. Such worsening conditions would inevitably necessitate a world government and its prophesied diabolical leader. "Environmentalists," concluded Leggett, "were in league with the Antichrist... We were doing his work for him." Others, including the popular eco-blog *Grist*, stated as fact this narrative that conservative evangelicals "feel that concern for the future of our planet is irrelevant, because it has no future."⁴³

⁴² Al Gore, *Earth In The Balance: Ecology and the Human Spirit* (New York, NY: Plume, 1992), 263.

⁴³ Jeremy Leggett, *The Carbon War: Global Warming and the End of the Oil Era* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2001), 173-175; Glenn Scherer, "The Godly Must Be Crazy," *Grist*, October 27 2004, <https://web.archive.org/web/20041115035502/http://www.grist.org/news/maindish/2004/10/27/scherer-christian/index.html>.

Unaware of the eschatological battles that had plagued conservative evangelicalism since the late 1980s, outside observers depicted premillennialism as not only averse to encroaching empire and apathetic to earthly conditions, but also a subversive cabal of elites committed to establishing their own theocratic kingdom. In the wake of the United States' withdrawal from the Kyoto Protocol in 2001, media scholar Mark Crispin Miller warned that the Bush administration was "not only antidemocratic and antirepublican, but fundamentally apocalyptic, and so it poses a grave threat not just to this republic, but to peoples everywhere and to the entire planet." Tying the plot together for American readers in an overheated post-9/11 world was Jeff Sharlet's best-seller *The Family*. In this exposé the journalist Sharlet claimed that a secret network of "neo-evangelicals" were secretly (or perhaps not so secretly) pulling the strings in Washington D.C. through their prayer breakfasts, weekend retreats, communal living, and deep pockets. Representing the "avant-garde of American fundamentalism," the Family had provided sanctuary for James Watt during his contentious time in the capital with the secretary regularly staying at one of the group's D.C. bungalows and imbibing their vision of Christian dominion.⁴⁴

Premillennialism is conspicuously absent in Sharlet's account of this dominionist network, with its founders and members sharing an optimistic style of postmillennialism framed by an Old Testament understanding of "covenants" as the primary means by

⁴⁴ Mark Crispin Miller, *Cruel and Unusual: Bush/Cheney's New World Order* (New York, NY: W. W. Norton & Company, 2004), xvii; Jeff Sharlet, *The Family: The Secret Fundamentalism at the Heart of American Power* (New York, NY: HarperCollins, 2008), 8, 26-27.

which God relates to nations. However, to untrained observers such theological distinctions were largely irrelevant. Fears of postmillennial political conspiracy melded with stereotypes of premillennial fatalism in the public imagination to produce a distorted image of conservative evangelicals as apocalyptic subversives quietly staging a theocratic coup which, if successful, could mean suicide for the planet. Even leading scientists such as the acclaimed biologist E. O. Wilson (who, like Gore, was raised in the Baptist tradition) considered premillennialism to be a potentially existential threat. In his book *The Creation*, Wilson referred to such end-times beliefs as “gospels of cruelty and despair” and warned that in the minds of those held such beliefs “the fate of ten million other life forms indeed does not matter.”⁴⁵

Some of the strongest (and most misleading) condemnations of end-times apathy came from journalist and former White House Press Secretary Bill Moyers. Like Wilson, Moyers was disturbed by evangelicals’ “Gospel of the Apocalypse.” A former Baptist pastor himself, he saw this eschatology as clearly detrimental to environmentalism given that “people in the grip of such fantasies cannot be expected to worry about the environment.” That polling data revealed end-times literalists to “constitute a significant force” in the conservative coalition disturbed him and he found little hope for climate action among those “who regard the environment as fuel for the fire that is coming.”⁴⁶ Unfortunately, Moyers antagonism toward premillennialism led him to uncritically

⁴⁵ E. O. Wilson, *The Creation: An Appeal to Save Life on Earth* (New York, NY: W. W. Norton & Company, 2006), 6.

⁴⁶ Bill Moyers, *Welcome to Doomsday* (New York, NY: New York Review of Books, 2006), 26, 29-30, 32.

attribute an apocryphal quote invented by his “favorite online environmental journal” *Grist* to the environmental movement’s favorite punching bag, James Watt. While accepting his Global Environmental Citizen Award from Harvard Medical School in 2004, Moyers used the opportunity to excoriate the premillennialists he believed were undermining the environmental movement. According to Moyers, nearly half of Congress, along with tens of millions of Americans, believed that ecological devastation should be “actually welcomed—even hastened” in order to accelerate God’s prophetic timetable. Such “delusional” Americans were following a trail blazed by Watt—whom Moyers mistakenly claimed had preached to Congress that “after the last tree is felled, Christ will come back.”⁴⁷ A righteously indignant Watt publicly responded by pointing out that Moyers was reviving “two-decades-old lies and applying them with a broad brush to whole segments of the Christian community.” Moyers was not alone in his error, noted Watt, as left-leaning theologians and environmentalists had enjoyed years of playing fast and loose with his congressional testimony. Moyers, for his part, would offer only a measured apology to Watt as the newspapers which had reprinted his speech published corrections.⁴⁸

⁴⁷ “Bill Moyers hearts us, and we him,” *Grist*, December 4, 2004, <https://grist.org/article/bill-moyers-hearts-us-and-we-him/>.

⁴⁸ James Watt, “The Religious Left’s Lies,” *Washington Post*, May 21, 2005, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/opinions/2005/05/21/the-religious-lefts-lies/c348908f-9c4a-4f73-ac88-603de131a06a/>; Joe Strupp, “Bill Moyers Apologizes to James Watt for Apocryphal Quote,” *Star Tribune*, February 9, 2005, <http://www.startribune.com/stories/1519/5232182/>.

Despite its cultural saliency, qualitative ethnographic studies of the End Times Apathy Hypothesis have been sparse. Wilkinson reported that it was only among her focus group at the most fundamentalist church she visited that she found much in the way of believers connecting issues of climate change to the biblical apocalyptic. Yet to her surprise, these fundamentalists drew such connections specifically to *counter* the idea that the end times absolved one of environmental responsibility. As one lay fundamentalist said, believing that the Rapture or the promise of a New Earth meant we were free to destroy this planet was "totally contrary to scripture and taking a few verses grossly out of context."⁴⁹ Shortly after Wilkinson's study, a team of researchers examining two conservative Baptist congregations found that while both "readily expounded a rhetoric of environmental apathy," their focus groups frequently invoked connections to the End Times when prompted to discuss climate change. While participants appeared undecided as to what effect their own actions could have, their prophetic framework did allow them to view secular and biblical doomsday scenarios as "complementary" and predisposed them to accept evidence that human activity could seriously influence the climate.⁵⁰

The most direct examination of the apocalypticism-environmentalism relationship appears in Robin Globus Veldman's *The Gospel of Climate Skepticism*. Veldman (who

⁴⁹ Wilkinson, *Between God and Green*, 90-91.

⁵⁰ Jared L. Peifer, Elaine Howard Ecklund and Cara Fullerton, "How Evangelicals from Two Churches in the American Southwest Frame Their Relationship with the Environment," *Review of Religious Research* 56, no. 3 (September, 2014), 374, 386-387. One respondent who rejected scientific warnings on the basis of their prophetic understanding did so given that scientists regularly attach specific dates to their climate projections. This believer was wise enough to remember the Bible's warning against false prophets that no person would know the "hour nor the time" of the final disaster and applied this strict test to scientists as well.

coined the term “End Times Apathy Hypothesis”) found that amidst the larger trend of evangelicals as climate skeptics, it was those who were most engaged with premillennialism who most readily accepted the reality of climate change, the science behind it, and its anthropogenic origins. Categorizing church members as “hot” or “cool” millennialists depending on how imminent and knowable they believed the End Times to be, she found that it was the hot millennialists who readily accepted climate change as fact and “immediately and confidently linked it to the end times.” However, these apocalyptic climate believers were a minority in the congregations she studied. The majority were cool to both the millennium and climate change. They professed that the End Times were neither imminent nor knowable and were “predominantly climate skeptics.”⁵¹

Thesis: Premillennial Environmentalism and Postmillennial Skepticism

What is one to make of this? Even after sifting through the stereotypes of evangelicals as apocalyptic anti-environmentalists, how does one explain their current state of climate skepticism? This is the same religious movement which had, according to Boyer, increasingly linked its premillennialist prophecies to the “rising tempo of environmental concern” since 1970 and which he predicted in the early 1990s would

⁵¹ Veldman, *The Gospel of Climate Skepticism*, 69-70.

make such concerns central to its apocalyptic activism.⁵² When and why then did evangelicals abandon their end times style of environmentalism?

The key to understanding this shift from premillennial fervor and ecological concern to “cool” millennialism and climate skepticism can actually be found in a brief citation note near the end of Veldman’s book. There she notes that her research and analysis did not seek out the possible influence of postmillennialism on her interviewees because, according to the accepted historiography, modern adherents to this eschatology are supposedly “few in number.” Christian Reconstructionists, however, constitute an “important exception” and she astutely recognizes that the leaders of this obscure movement have influenced evangelicals to “set aside the premillennialist tendency to withdraw from politics in favor of more active involvement in public life.” Therefore, she cautions, postmillennial Reconstructionism “may have shaped my informants’ outlook indirectly,” but her focus groups did not appear aware of how their views may have been conditioned by an eschatology diametrically opposed to the beliefs they consciously held.⁵³

Emerging in the early 1970s, Christian Reconstructionism combines the optimistic postmillennialism which had energized earlier Social Gospel reformers with a Calvinistic understanding of Old Testament covenantal law as still applicable to nations and individuals today. This commitment to fulfilling covenantal obligations applies

⁵² Boyer, *When Time Shall Be No More*, 331.

⁵³ Veldman, *The Gospel of Climate Skepticism*, 248-249.

especially to the original covenant—the “Dominion Mandate” of Genesis 1:28. God’s command that humanity “subdue the Earth” motivates the “dominionist” agenda of Reconstructionists while their postmillennialism gives them an unshakeable confidence that they will inevitably be successful in constructing a world in which both nature and civilization submit themselves to Christian rule. Lastly, Reconstructionist reasoning is epistemically grounded in presuppositionalism—the perspective that one’s core presuppositions (such as whether God exists) irresistibly shape one’s ability to comprehend reality. Thus any study of science must begin with the Bible and its presuppositions rather than hypothesis and observation. In contrast, premillennialism and evangelicalism broadly have traditionally approached science from a Baconian perspective which allowed them to incorporate the latest empirical discoveries into their Two Books theology—the belief that both Scripture *and* Nature reveal God’s truth. For Reconstructionists, *only* the Bible reveals such truth. Science, in their view, is merely an instrument for furthering human dominion. As a result, reports of such dominion producing catastrophic environmental degradation have been anathema to Reconstructionists’ and their postmillennial vision of a globe renewed by science and industry in service of an advancing Christian civilization.

Veldman is certainly not alone in rightfully suspecting the potentially radical anti-environmental influence of Reconstructionism but also being unsure of the historical channels through which such influence might have been transmitted and the extent to which it has been responsible for shaping the recent evangelical consensus of skepticism

and anti-environmentalism. Paul Maltby, writing on environmental ethics, saw how dominionist interpretations of Genesis tended to reduce the natural world and its living organisms to merely “artifacts designed to satisfy human needs.” He even observed how Reconstructionist politics were driving the anti-environmental views of evangelical leaders, but ultimately fell back on the End Times Apathy Hypothesis: “Why care about ecological crisis when true believers will be rescued by the Rapture?”⁵⁴ Similarly, environmental economist Martinus Petrus de Wit discerned the ramifications of the Reconstructionist mission which demanded the rejection of “both neoclassical and ecological economics and reconstruction of an entirely different Christian economics as based on Biblical laws and guidelines.” However, de Wit did not press his findings to the point of contrasting them with the ecological sensitivity encouraged by premillennialism or rebutting the End Times Apathy Hypothesis.⁵⁵

Swartz, in his account, saw that Reconstructionists and their Institute for Christian Economics had been the first evangelicals to ruthlessly attack the ecological concern of the Evangelical Left and Ron Sider in the 1970s, but he did not follow the activity of Reconstructionists far enough to see them impart their antagonism to the evangelical Right and ultimately the evangelical mainstream.⁵⁶ Even Boyer did not fully recognize the influence of Reconstructionists, writing that aside from voting for Christian political

⁵⁴ Paul Maltby, “Fundamentalist Dominion, Postmodern Ecology,” *Ethics and the Environment* 13, no. 2 (Fall, 2008), 120-121.

⁵⁵ Martinus Petrus de Wit, “Christian Economists, Environmental Externalities and Ecological Scale,” *Philosophia Reformata* 78, no. 2 (2013), 186.

⁵⁶ Swartz, *Moral Minority*, 159.

candidates their strategies “remained vague” and saw their influence as primarily restricted to certain charismatic and Pentecostal ministries. In his estimation such influence was short-lived as “premillennialists sharply criticized this outbreak of postmillennialism in the heart of the evangelical camp and it remained a minor strand in late-twentieth-century prophecy belief, volubly espoused by a few, but lacking broad grassroots support.”⁵⁷ Unbeknownst to Boyer writing in the early 1990s, Reconstructionist ideas—in particular its anti-environmentalism—had already taken root within the broader movement and would soon bear the skeptical fruit we observe today.

The history of evangelical environmentalism reveals that it has been the influence of Christian Reconstructionism rather than premillennialism which has produced the present anti-environmental attitudes. In fact, in contrast to its popular image, premillennialism has often served as the impetus for conservative evangelicals to give special heed to the findings of scientists and in turn cultivated a uniquely apocalyptic concern for ecology. Since the 1970s, premillennialists and Reconstructionists have wrestled for influence over the hearts of the evangelical laity and the agendas of their leaders. That the interpretations of evangelical environmentalism by historians and social scientists have varied widely represents neither contradiction nor conundrum but rather evidence of precisely this dynamic and heavily-contested change over time.

Premillennialism, especially its popular dispensationalist form, has served as the chief eschatology of conservative evangelicals since the late nineteenth century and

⁵⁷ Boyer, *When Time Shall Be No More*, 303-304.

regularly endured challenges from postmillennial theologians who decried its populist sensibilities and a hermeneutic which they charged relied *too heavily* on secular scientific sources. Its popularity grew tremendously in the late 1940s with the advent of nuclear weapons, major international organizations like the World Bank and United Nations, and the state of Israel. The 1970s saw the birth of the environmental movement and Christian Reconstructionism, but also the further growth of premillennialism as an explosion of best-selling paperback prophecy books combined ecological concerns with older themes.

While most historians of evangelicalism have viewed premillennialism as never relinquishing its lead over other eschatologies, postmillennialism made tremendous unrecognized gains within evangelicalism across the 1980s due to the tireless efforts of a handful of Reconstructionists. With presses running night and day, these Reconstructionists packaged their anti-environmental views into an overflowing catalogue of books promoting causes which at the time were alien to premillennialists but which today are well-established within even mainstream evangelicalism: Young Earth creation science, providentialist histories of "Christian America," and the budding Christian homeschool movement. Each of these causes emerged directly from Reconstructionists' presuppositional epistemology and served as beachheads for launching attacks on what they saw as the defeatist and unacceptably tolerant eschatology of premillennialism. The Reconstructionist-Premillennialist War would come to a head in a series of debates in 1988-89 and though Reconstructionists would loudly trumpet what they saw as victories, both sides would soon find themselves turned out by the

evangelical political leadership. Seeking to distance themselves from the draconian image of strict Reconstructionist theonomy and the embarrassment of premillennialism's failed predictions, evangelical leaders by the mid-1990s were content to embrace a version of postmillennialism that could justify this-worldly political efforts while still making room for premillennialism to the extent that it proved useful in evangelism efforts. In doing so, evangelicalism gradually jettisoned the ecological sensitivity that premillennialism had encouraged in favor of a Reconstructionist-inspired worldview which is both skeptical of environmentalism and determined to increase the very scientific and industrial processes which have produced our current climate.

In presenting this tumultuous historical account, this dissertation draws from a wide range of sources and methods while seeking to add new perspectives to a host of ongoing academic discourses. Given evangelicalism's penchant for the written word and the conviction among its believers that personal reflection upon devotional texts constitutes a pious act of spiritual cultivation, this work has sought out those texts which have garnered both the widest readership and prompted the deepest reflections. The private musings and correspondences of evangelical elites are largely absent here in favor of denominational newspapers, glossy magazines, biblical commentaries, reprinted sermons, cassette ministries, seminary textbooks, homeschool curriculum, conference volumes, best-selling "Christian Living" books, and most importantly—the prophecy paperback. Dismissed by skeptics and dog-eared by believers, the prophecy paperback—especially during the 1970s and 1980s—was a ubiquitous feature of the evangelical

subculture and not even their astounding sales figures can fully capture their reach as purchased copies were regularly shared amongst Bible study groups and loaned to friends. Crucially, these books now function as something akin to cultural and theological ice core samples, preserving for present day readers the hopes and fears of conservative evangelicals in a rapidly changing world. Often criticized for their perceived shallowness and pulp nature, in practice these works drew upon a rich tradition of interpretations and motifs that stretched back centuries. The eclectic yet constrained nature of these books allowed them to regularly touch upon a tremendous range of concerns (including environmentalism) and preserve, like time capsules with yellowed pages, the contours of the grassroots evangelical zeitgeist across time.

Whereas studies of evangelical environmentalism have previously relied almost exclusively upon the discrete methods of sociology, religious studies, or history, this work deploys an interdisciplinary approach to understand how the beliefs and practices of millions of believers have interacted with broader, historical socio-political contexts. Combining the cultural sensitivity of both Religious and American Studies with the theologically-informed perspective of one who was trained in premillennialism at an evangelical college, this dissertation adds a hitherto absent depth to the breadth of the historian's archival scouring. Belief has rarely been the sole determinative factor in evangelicals' attitudes, but the waxing and waning of various theologies *have* predisposed the grassroots of the movement toward receiving or rejecting various political stances which leaders and historical circumstances have attempted to force upon them. Grasping

the nuances of evangelical theology and the trends of its attendant subculture is crucial for understanding why the faith has often defied the analysis of historians and sociologists—at times actively resisting apparent conservative positions while at other points racing headlong past more moderate ones.

This innovative approach to understanding the roots of present-day environmental opposition by evangelicals speaks to a multitude of ongoing academic conversations. As a work of Environmental History, this project adds the perspective of everyday believers to those discussions of how ideas and conceptions of Nature (in this case, “Creation”) influence human interactions with their environment. In the vein of Religious History, this work not only contributes to an understanding of “evangelicalism” as defined by both theological and commercial practices, but presents a revisionist account of dynamic change that stands in contrast to present historiographical trend of depicting such a faith as a static monolith whose past has been marked by continuity and whose present positions can be seen as inevitable. This dissertation’s iconoclasm continues into the realm of Science & Religion as it dismantles notions of the ever-popular “conflict thesis” between the two ontologies and demonstrates the radical empiricism and receptivity to scientific findings which premillennialism has historically encouraged among the largest faith group in the United States. Finally, this account affirms the hope among Religion & Ecology scholars that legitimately “green” theologies can be recovered from even the most seemingly conservative and apocalyptic traditions

1: “AN EXQUISITELY BEAUTIFUL ORB”: THE APOCALYPTIC ROOTS OF EVANGELICAL ENVIRONMENTALISM

Nearly two-thousand years before the first Earth Day celebration and the birth of the environmental movement in 1970, early Christians were already thinking about the planet, its condition, and its ultimate fate. While scholars continue to debate whether Jesus of Nazareth ought to be classified as a prophet of the apocalypse, he did not hesitate to tell his disciples of the Last Days and the natural phenomena that would signal their approach. Standing on the Mount of Olives, he warned them of a coming time when famines, plagues, and earthquakes would trouble every part of the world while atmospheric disturbances dimmed the light of the sun, moon, and stars. He instructed them to watch for such signs in the same manner as one would discern the coming season by observing a fig tree putting forth tender green branches.

Following Jesus’ earthly ministry, his followers continued to preach his message of cataclysm followed by the awaited redemption of both the Church and the Creation. The apostle Paul wrote to believers that they were not alone in their hopeful expectation of the coming Kingdom of God and that the Creation “groaneth” as it waits painfully for its promised renewal. Other apostolic letters described how the Earth and its elements will in the last days be dissolved by “fervent heat” in preparation for the promised new Heaven and new Earth. The concluding book of the Bible, the Book of Revelation, is filled with graphic descriptions of both the hellish destruction of planet Earth and its final

Edenic state. Amidst the horrors of global war and demonic torments, this time of tribulation features natural disasters including famines, floods, droughts, earthquakes, poisoned waters, plagues, climate disruption, scorching heat, unprecedented hailstorms, and the death of most of the planet's plant and animal life. However, following the battle of Armageddon the forces of evil are defeated, judged, and eventually cast into an eternal lake of fire. Then the final work of redemption begins as the Creation is relieved of sin's burdensome curse. This redeemed Earth teems with abundant resources never to be exploited through human greed. Plants and animals are restored to perfect harmony. Rivers of pure water flow. Even the larger geological forces of solar variation and tectonic upheaval cease as divine stasis permeates and sustains the globe. This is the culminating ecological vision of the Bible. All of which leads the author of Revelation to conclude with a final exhortation: "Even so, come, Lord Jesus."¹

Defining Evangelicals and Their Millennial Beliefs

Spreading outward from Jerusalem, the first-century Christians brought with them the gospel of their Lord Jesus Christ and also his apocalyptic message. The Greek word for this "good news" of salvation—*euangelion*—is the origin of the modern "evangelical," the largest religious group in the United States today. Yet despite their ubiquity, precisely defining who is an evangelical remains a task which confounds scholars, pundits, and believers themselves. When asked directly, roughly 35% of

¹ Matthew 24; Romans 8:22; 2 Peter 3:10-13; Revelation 21-22.

Americans self-identified as evangelical in 2015. However, when asked if they agreed with nine common evangelical doctrines, only 6% made the cut.² Historians in turn have proposed dozens of competing definitions aiming for specificity. Of these, the most widely accepted has undoubtedly been David Bebbington's four-part definition. Known as "Bebbington's Quadrilateral," it defines an evangelical on the basis of biblicism (the centrality of the Bible as authoritative), crucicentrism (the centrality of Christ's death on the cross as salvational), conversionism (the centrality of repentance and forgiveness in the individual's spiritual life), and activism (the centrality of spreading Christ's gospel in the individual's earthly life). Even the National Association of Evangelicals, after noting the difficulty of cleanly defining "what is an evangelical," offers Bebbington's Quadrilateral as a useful starting point.³

For the purpose of this study, if one were to add anything to Bebbington's reliable definition it would likely be millennialism—the centrality of hope in the earnest

² "America's Changing Religious Landscape," Pew Research Center, May 12, 2015, <https://www.pewresearch.org/religion/2015/05/12/americas-changing-religious-landscape/>; "Survey Explores Who Qualifies As an Evangelical," Barna Group, January 18, 2007, <https://www.barna.com/research/survey-explores-who-qualifies-as-an-evangelical/>.

³ David W. Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain: A History from the 1730s to the 1980s* (London: Routledge, 1989), 2-3; National Association of Evangelicals, "What is an evangelical?" www.nae.org/what-is-an-evangelical/; For doctrine-based definitions following Bebbington's lead, see Mark Noll, *American Evangelical Christianity: An Introduction* (Hoboken, NJ: Blackwell, 2001) and Thomas S. Kidd, *Who Is an Evangelical? The History of a Movement in Crisis* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2019).

expectation that God will fulfill every divine promise.⁴ For U.S. evangelicals and their Christian predecessors stretching back to the first century, the hopes and fears entangled with the ever-impending Last Days have proven adaptable to any circumstance and powerfully motivating.

Although Bebbington's definition has provided much of the common ground for scholars exploring evangelicalism over the past three decades, historians of race and gender have offered important cautions against the uncritical acceptance of definitions primarily focused on doctrine. Margaret Bendroth, a feminist religious historian, agrees with Bebbington's emphasis on Protestant doctrines and missionary outreach when viewing evangelicalism as a broad historic tradition, but labels the twentieth-century U.S. iteration as the "modern-day heirs of fundamentalism" and defines fundamentalism as a movement which adds militarism in defense of both society and orthodoxy to the equation.⁵ Other scholars have emphasized the idea of evangelicals as primarily political actors.⁶ For Jesse Curtis, a historian of race, even theology has typically served as "one of

⁴ Historian W. R. Ward has proposed his own "evangelical hexagon" which includes among its tenets eschatology and a vitalist understanding of nature; W. R. Ward, *Early Evangelicalism: A Global Intellectual History, 1670-1787* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 4. While vitalism will make a brief appearance in this study, for all practical purposes a "pentagonal" definition of biblicism, crucicentrism, conversionism, activism, and millennialism will suffice.

⁵ Margaret Lamberts Bendroth, *Fundamentalism & Gender: 1875 to the Present* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1993), 3-5.

⁶ See Frances FitzGerald, *The Evangelicals: The Struggle to Shape America* (New York, NY: Simon & Schuster, 2017) and Sarah Diefendorf, *The Holy Vote: Inequality and Anxiety among White Evangelicals* (Oakland, CA: University of California Press, 2023).

the main ways evangelicals performed politics.”⁷ Overall, these scholars—while not completely dissatisfied with Bebbington’s definition—believe a strict emphasis on theology is too narrow and “masks far more often than it illuminates.”⁸

More recently, a growing cadre of economic and cultural historians have largely rejected doctrinal definitions altogether and instead proposed defining evangelicals along more commercial lines. According to Daniel Vaca, the amorphous and transdenominational nature of evangelicalism resists clear doctrinal consensus and instead such the religious community is connected more so by its shared participation in a consumer subculture—particularly through shopping at evangelical bookstores and reading evangelical books. Viewing evangelicalism as a “commercial religion,” Vaca argues that it has been the book publishing industry which has generated “evangelical identities, and the very idea of a coherent evangelical population.”⁹ Daniel Silliman states this even more plainly in his definition of evangelicals as “people who shop at Christian bookstores.”¹⁰ This link between industry and evangelicalism is so strong that Darren Grem has argued that this religious movement owes its “place in American society” to the investments made by corporations in manufacturing their culture and supporting their

⁷ Jesse Curtis, *The Myth of Colorblind Christians: Evangelicals and White Supremacy in the Civil Rights Era* (New York, NY: New York University Press, 2021), 5.

⁸ Douglas L. Winiarki, *Darkness Falls on the Land of Light: Experiencing Religious Awakenings in Eighteenth-Century New England* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2017), 15-16

⁹ Daniel Vaca, *Evangelicals Incorporated: Books and the Business of Religion in America* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2019), 2-3, 8-9.

¹⁰ Daniel Silliman, *Reading Evangelicals: How Christian Fiction Shaped a Culture and a Faith* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2021), 8.

activities.¹¹ Even a scholar like Kristen Kobes Du Mez in her exploration of modern evangelicalism and masculinity has lent credence to such a definitional orientation—calling Bebbington’s markers “arguable” and acknowledging that “the evangelical marketplace itself helps define who is inside and who is outside the fold.”¹²

Perhaps no theological component of Christianity has been more misunderstood than the millennial expectations of its apocalypticism. Often detested by non-believers and perpetually debated by believers, the belief in a coming millennial kingdom ruled by Christ has both inspired hope and spurred action. This hope is crucial for understanding the internal logic of millennialism and its function as a motivating force within evangelicalism. Despite popular emphasis on the apocalypse as entirely destructive (doomsday, tribulation, Armageddon, etc.), the *eschaton* (the final events in God’s divine plan for the universe) has chiefly served as the *culmination of hope* for believers. The “End” is only the end for those who choose to remain outside the kingdom. For believers, the end is in reality a glorious new beginning for Creation.

Guided by the conviction that God’s Old Testament promises, Christ’s prophecies, and the vision of John in the Book of Revelation all refer to the same eschatological reality, many evangelicals anticipate a “millennium” prior to the new Heaven and new

¹¹ Darren E. Grem, *The Blessings of Business: How Corporations Shaped Conservative Christianity* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2016), 237.

¹² Kristen Kobes Du Mez, *Jesus and John Wayne: How White Evangelicals Corrupted a Faith and Fractured a Nation* (New York, NY: Liveright Publishing Corporation, 2020), 5, 9.

Earth wherein Christ reigns over this Earth and Satan is bound.¹³ Historically, believers have held to one of three interpretations: premillennialism, postmillennialism, and amillennialism. Premillennialists interpret prophecy in a highly-literalistic fashion—with the millennial kingdom being a physical entity lasting for exactly one thousand years. Importantly, their literalistic reading of the predicted tribulations leads them to view the world as in inevitable decline and Satan’s *future* binding as indicative of him being *presently* unbound and ruling over the Earth. This in turn has often heightened their receptivity to reports of environmental decay as the planet and civilization will reach their nadir just prior to Christ’s return. In their vigilance to discern the literal fulfillments of prophecy, premillennialists have historically embraced empirical science while their anticipation of civilization’s decline has often made them suspicious of nationalistic projects.

Conversely, postmillennialists see construction of the kingdom as already underway through missionary activity and efforts to advance Christian civilization. These improvement efforts will culminate with Christ returning to a planet on the verge of perfection. Postmillennialists believe that Christ’s resurrection has already forced Satan to abdicate his rule over the Earth and thus are often reluctant to accept reports that

¹³ The most direct description of this millennium comes from Revelation 20 which describes an angel binding Satan with a great chain and throwing him into a bottomless pit for a thousand years. At the same time, those martyred for their faith are resurrected and rule with Christ in his millennial kingdom. At the expiration of this millennium, Satan is loosed for a brief season to “deceive that nations” and launch a final attack on the godly. Fire falls from heaven and consumes the forces of evil, Satan (along with Death itself) is cast into the lake of fire for eternity, and every soul that has ever lived is judged before the Great White Throne. It is only after all of this that the Creation is renewed and the new Heaven and new Earth appear.

human activity—especially in service of Christian civilization—has produced environmental degradation. While not historically opposed to empirical science, postmillennialists have tended to prioritize its utility in service to advancing Christian civilization (e.g. Manifest Destiny) and securing that dominion over the Earth which was commanded in Genesis, made possible through Christ, and will be completed with his Second Coming.

Finally, amillennialists reject the idea of a literal kingdom ruled by Christ prior to the new Heaven and new Earth and interpret such passages as symbolically describing the trials and triumphs of the Church. For such believers, the millennial kingdom exists here and now as Christ reigns from heaven. Likewise, Satan's inability to thwart the preaching of the Gospel signifies that he is presently bound. Christ's second coming will immediately inaugurate eternity and the Creation's renewal. As an open-ended, mostly symbolic eschatology, amillennialism has not typically predisposed believers toward or against science or nationalism to the degree that premillennialism and postmillennialism have.

The Historical Development of Christian Millennialism

Historically, each of these three eschatologies have at times risen to prominence among Christians. With the writing of the Book of Revelation circa AD 95 and the subsequent persecution of believers by the Roman Empire, early Christianity was a hotbed of millennialism—though discerning whether these communities were

predominantly premillennial or amillennial (postmillennialism would remain a very minor strand until the early modern era) remains the subject of much debate. What is known is that by the mid-second century Justin Martyr (one of the early Church “Fathers”) had affirmed the orthodoxy of a literal millennial kingdom while an overtly millennial movement known as Montanism was rapidly attracting followers and causing great unease among those working to consolidate the young faith. Shortly after this Irenaeus, the Bishop of Lyons, would also affirm millennialism as absolutely orthodox in *Against Heresies*.¹⁴

However, this initial tide of millennialism would begin to fade by the start of the third century. In 203 Pope Zephyrinus condemned Montanism as heresy. By 230 the highly influential Origen—himself a former advocate of literalistic millennialism—in his *On First Principles* (the first systematic Christian theology) decried such beliefs in favor a more allegorical amillennialism.¹⁵ That same year two synods in Phrygia declared Montanist baptisms invalid, casting doubt on the salvation of those still belonging to the

¹⁴ Martyr’s affirmation of millennialism appears in his *Dialogue with Trypho*, circa AD 155. In this apologetic work, he professes a premillennialist belief that the resurrected dead will reign for a thousand years with Christ—though he notes that there are many true Christians who “think otherwise.”; Montanism began in Phrygia (modern-day Turkey) when a man named Montanus claimed to be the Holy Spirit incarnate and preached an ascetic life of prayer and fasting in anticipation of Christ’s soon return. According to historian Paul Boyer, by AD 172 Montanism was a rapidly growing sect that took the intensifying Roman persecution under Marcus Aurelius as proof that the end was near and spread their message as far as the western regions of Europe and Africa. Paul Boyer, *When Time Shall Be No More: Prophecy Belief in Modern American Culture* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1992), 46-47; Like Martyr, Irenaeus’ millennialism was literalistic and premillennial in style.

¹⁵ Origen ridiculed such millennialists, writing that they “do not perceive [millennial prophecy] is to be taken figuratively...They think they are to be kings and princes, like those earthly monarchs who now exist.” Boyer suspects that Origen’s disdain for literalism may well have been due to the fact that as a young man he had castrated himself in literal obedience to Christ’s command in Matthew 9:12. Boyer, *When Time Shall Be No More*, 47.

fading sect.¹⁶ As the Church worked to stamp out the pesky subversion of millennialism, continued state persecution kept its flame lingering. In the wake of emperor Valerian's renewed Christian persecution (257-260), Victorinus, the Bishop of Pettau, produced what is today the oldest surviving commentary on the Book of Revelation and affirmed a literalistic style of millennialism.

Although the story of amillennialism's ascendancy over premillennialism is a complex and convoluted tale, it is generally accepted that the most decisive turning point came with Saint Augustine in the early fifth century. Aside from the Bible, few books can lay claim to having influenced the course of Christianity more than the Bishop of Hippo's *The City of God*. In it, Augustine allegorized not only the future kingdom but all of history itself as the struggle between the earthly and the divine. This allegorical hermeneutic quickly found support in Rome. The Catholic Church, now well-established and favored by the empire, promoted Augustinian amillennialism and actively suppressed competing views—even going so far as to destroy every copy of Irenaeus' millenarian writings it could find.¹⁷ For roughly the next thousand years, amillennialism would serve as the dominant Christian eschatology, though a bubbling undercurrent of immanent and

¹⁶ These synods at Iconium and Synnada also declared that any Montanist attempting to join the Church would have to submit to Catholic baptism, further cementing the Church's supremacy over rogue millennialist sects.

¹⁷ Among the many reasons for which the Church wished to curb more literalistic and premillennial views was their association with Jewish thinking. Some in Rome considered Christians who hoped for a coming earthly kingdom akin to the Zealots of Judaism. See Chapter 3 for further discussion of how, even within U.S. evangelicalism, the extent to which opposition to premillennialism has been motivated by anti-Semitism remains a sensitive and highly-charged debate.

literalistic apocalypticism would continue to percolate among the peasants and wandering mystics.¹⁸

Far from promoting passivity and otherworldliness, millennial enthusiasm would at times burst forth, spurring massive undertakings and even radically subversive politics. In 1191, while preparing for what would become the Third Crusade, Richard the Lionheart traveled to Messina to meet with the Calabrian apocalypticist Joachim of Fiore. Joachim, who preached a tripartite schema of prophetic interpretation, believed that Saladin, the Muslim leader in control of Jerusalem, was likely the final predecessor to the Antichrist and advised Richard on the prophetic significance of his quest.¹⁹ Though far more literalistic than Augustine, Joachim was will an amillennialist and did not foresee Christ ruling on Earth prior to eternity. However, this did not preclude the possibility of a godly “Emperor of the Last Days” capturing Jerusalem, establishing Christendom, and inaugurating the Second Coming. Such millennial expectations began to swirl around Frederick II in 1220 when he began his reign in Germany and reached a crescendo in 1229 when he seized control of Jerusalem. Following his death, some even predicted that a resurrected Frederick would return to establish his own thousand-year kingdom.²⁰

¹⁸ Norman Cohn, *The Pursuit of the Millennium: Revolutionary Millenarians and Mystical Anarchists of the Middle Ages*, revised and expanded edition (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1970), 16-17.

¹⁹ Marjorie Reeves, *The Influence of Prophecy in the Later Middle Ages: A Study in Joachimism* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1969), 6-8. Joachim interpreted prophecy with the Trinity as his model and believed that the present Age of the Son would soon give way to a final Age of the Spirit. This age would see believers infused with a radical dispensation of spiritual love that would allow them to commune with God directly without the need for ecclesiastical hierarchy. Unsurprisingly, by 1215 the Church had condemned such views.

²⁰ Cohn, *The Pursuit of the Millennium*, 111-118.

Other placed their hope not in empires but in communalism. Following the execution of Jan Hus as a heretic in 1415, Hus's followers became known as "Taborites" and practiced a style of egalitarian communalism so radical that social ecologist Murray Bookchin described it as anarchic and "avowedly communistic." Expecting the soon return of Christ, Taborites engaged in both asceticism and bloodshed. However, after twenty years of anticipation it was not Christ and his angelic reinforcements who arrived, but an overwhelming Catholic army which crushed their forces and hanged the survivors.²¹

The most historically significant millennial undertaking occurred in 1492 when Christopher Columbus embarked on his fateful voyage. When Christian Europe found itself cut off from the Holy Lands by Muslim rule, Columbus proposed to the Spanish monarchs a voyage to discover an alternate route to Asia. Having read the accounts of Marco Polo, Columbus knew that the Grand Khan was at least tentatively receptive to Christianity and hoped in the best case to raise a grand army of Asian Christians to converge with European forces upon the Holy Lands and usher Christ's return through their victory. If such an army failed to materialize, Columbus was sure that the gold obtained through Asian trade would still be enough to muster the largest crusading force

²¹ Cohn, *The Pursuit of the Millennium*, 211-214; Murray Bookchin, *The Ecology of Freedom: The Emergence and Dissolution of Hierarchy*, revised edition (New York, NY: Black Rose Books, 1991), 202-203.

ever and secure Christendom's final victory. It was this quest for the end of the world that led Columbus to the "New World."²²

The Protestant reformers were highly ambivalent toward millennialism. Twentieth-century premillennialists would lament that the reformers did not say more about their individual eschatologies, but understood that they had more pressing theological matters at hand. In the case of the Reformation's central figure, Martin Luther did not hesitate to denounce Pope Leo X's opposition as inspired by Antichrist and even identified the Pope as the Antichrist in his 1530 German Bible. John Calvin, in his *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, would likewise promote the Pope-Antichrist connection. However, Reformation leaders like Calvin were also quick to rebuke millennial rhetoric when it was used to stir peasants to bloody conflict and Luther even went so far as to omit the Book of Revelation from his Bible, calling it "neither apostolic nor prophetic."²³ Still, accusations of the Pope as Antichrist stung Catholic counter-reformers who sought a new hermeneutical defense of the Church. Amillennialism, dominant since Augustine, typically employed a *historicist* hermeneutic whereby the scenes of Revelation play out in history rather than awaiting some future fulfillment. Protestant reformers used such hermeneutics to argue that it was entirely possible the descriptions of the Antichrist applied to a corrupt papacy. In response, a Spanish Jesuit

²² Carol Delaney, *Columbus and the Quest for Jerusalem* (New York, NY: Free Press, 2011), 237. Writing in his diary on December 26, 1492, Columbus vowed that within three years his voyage would allow the Spanish Crown to finance a final crusade to "conquer the Holy Sepulcher; for thus I urged Your Highness to spend all the profits of this my enterprise on the conquest of Jerusalem."

²³ Boyer, *When Time Shall Be No More*, 61.

named Franciscus Ribeira revived the *futurist* style of interpretation that had generally characterized early premillennialism in his 1591 commentary on Revelation. Thus counter-reformers could now argue that the Pope could not be the Antichrist because such a figure and all attendant prophecies still lay in the future.²⁴ This revival of futurist hermeneutics combined with the spread of Protestantism helped to create the conditions for the reemergence of premillennialism, especially in western Europe. A third element, Baconian science, would help to shape it into its modern form.

Apocalyptic Empiricism Versus Apocalyptic Nationalism

Sir Francis Bacon, a man of both religion and science, believed that every aspect of God's Creation was knowable and that through empirical observation and the careful assembling of facts humanity could recover the knowledge it had lost through sin in Eden. Baconian empiricism appeared perfectly suited for Christ's admonition that wise believers would be able to discern the signs of the times. In the premillennialist repertoire, accurate knowledge of the present could enable the predicting of the future. As historian George Marsden has observed, far from being an "anti-scientific" movement, evangelicals—even the most fundamentalistic—have historically found Baconian science extremely compatible with their "common sense" approach to the Bible and this empiricism has even served as something of a unifying force among this inherently

²⁴ Boyer, *When Time Shall Be No More*, 60-62.

individualistic and schismatic body of believers.²⁵ Historian Mark Noll, an evangelical himself, has lamented evangelicalism's reluctance to move beyond Baconianism into newer modes of scientific inquiry, but he has praised his predecessors for promoting a reciprocal relationship between Science and Scripture. These earlier evangelicals (again, even the most fundamentalistic of them) were "united in believing that biblical interpretation needed a contribution from the day's best science, even as it exerted an influence on the application of scientific conclusions."²⁶ By the end of the seventeenth century, Bacon's mode of observation and inductive reason would become a staple of premillennialism.

Similar to Baconian empiricism and premillennialism, around this same time a synthesis of optimism and Lockean rationalism would lead to the flowering of what had been only a minor strand among millennialists: postmillennialism. Although the first Puritans to arrive in North America had been a grimly apocalyptic group sharing the premillennial outlook of their European counterparts, as their confidence began to

²⁵ George Marsden, *Fundamentalism and American Culture*, second edition (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2006), 7. Marsden considers Baconian empiricism and Scottish Common Sense Realism to be the two philosophical foundations of fundamentalism. Importantly, fundamentalists remain the most fiercely premillennialism strand within U.S. evangelicalism.

²⁶ Mark Noll, *The Scandal of the Evangelical Mind* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1994), 185; In addition to science, emerging forms of mathematics also inspired premillennial evangelicals. A growing certainty in the literalness of the Bible led many to believe that they could combine prophecy with calculation to discern the specific dates of fulfillment. The most famous example of this is William Miller and the Millerite phenomenon of the 1840s, but he was far from alone in his misplaced confidence. In 1594, John Napier, the inventor of logarithms, published *A Plaine Discovery of the Whole Revelation of St. John* and, using his new mathematical formulas, predicted that the world would end in 1688. His book would go through twenty-three editions before disappointment ultimately set in. Even Sir Isaac Newton would try his hand at calculating the End. Among his notes for *Observations on Daniel and The Apocalypse of St. John*, scholars have found calculations by Newton identifying 2060 as the date the world will end.

grow in their colonial project so too did their eschatology become more optimistic. By 1676, Increase Mather was hopefully speculating that the American colonies might represent a “type” or forerunner of the prophesied New Jerusalem (and preaching powerful jeremiads describing what ills might befall them if they failed in their historic task). It was this moment of proto-nationalistic optimism and duty that historian Stephen J. Stein refers to as the “Americanization of the apocalyptic tradition.” This view received a tremendous boost a few decades later when Jonathan Edwards began to import a more systematized eschatological framework for constructing a Christian civilization from Daniel Whitby, an Arminian priest of the Church of England. Whitby agreed with Augustine that there would be no divine intervention until the very end of time, but his “New Hypothesis” combined the rationalism and optimism with biblical promises of restoration and flourishing to argue that human efforts would bring about the millennium. His 1703 New Testament commentary containing this hypothesis was highly popular among later American ministers in support of the nation-building project—being reprinted up through the mid-nineteenth century.²⁷

As nationalistic postmillennialism was taking root in North America, scientific premillennialism was continuing to develop in Europe. Although many of these

²⁷ Stephen J. Stein, “Transatlantic Extensions: Apocalyptic in Early New England,” C. A. Patrides and Joseph Wittreich, eds., *The Apocalypse in English Renaissance Thought and Literature* (Manchester, UK: Manchester University Press, 1984), 273; Boyer, *When Time Shall Be No More*, 68, 80-81. In 1739 Edwards preached a series of messages titled *History of the Work of Redemption* in which he borrowed heavily from Whitby and helped to turn Protestant thinking from the premillennialism of the Puritans toward the postmillennialism of Manifest Destiny. Daniel Whitby, *A Paraphrase and Commentary on the New Testament* (London, UK: William Tegg and Company, 1849).

premillennialists tended to focus on geopolitical upheavals and attempts at identifying the Antichrist, they also devoted a surprising amount of energy toward observing the natural world and its potentially apocalyptic transformations. This allowed them to offer both supernatural and naturalistic commentary on future conditions by, as Boyer has noted, “buttressing their interpretations with current theories in physics and astronomy.”²⁸

Some of the earliest examples appear in the late seventeenth-century works of men like Thomas Burnet and William Whiston. To Burnet’s scientific mind, every cataclysm in the Bible—from Noah’s Flood to the final transformation of the Earth—could be explained on the basis of physical laws established by God at Creation. In *The Sacred Theory of the Earth* (originally published in Latin in 1681), he presented “irresistible evidence” that the “Blessed Millennium” would arrive only once “Nature is renew’d” as opposed to the growing postmillennial trend of preaching the Earth’s ultimate fate as one of annihilation. For Whiston (who assumed Isaac Newton’s chair as professor of mathematics at Cambridge), the careful study of comets and their effects on heavenly bodies offered insight into the Bible’s strangest phenomena. Drawing heavily from Edmund Halley’s recent discoveries, Whiston’s 1698 *Vindication of the New Theory of the Earth* reasoned how passing comets might someday produce the fiery renewal of

²⁸ Boyer, *When Time Shall Be No More*, 66.

the Earth predicted in Scripture.²⁹ Such works, however, would remain largely the domain of individual thinkers up until the late 1820s when modern scientific premillennialism “came of age” according to historian Ernest Sandeen. It was at that time that conferences, societies, and publications began connecting theologians and scholars across the Atlantic.³⁰ Still premillennialism's growth, especially in the United States, would be overshadowed for most of the nineteenth century by its counterpart.

In the United States, nationalistic postmillennialism reached the apex of its influence in the 1850s as the heady days of virtually unchecked expansion led some enthusiastic ministers to proclaim that the nation was on the verge of establishing a global Christian civilization. Methodist minister Samuel Davies Baldwin's 1854 treatise *Armageddon*—subtitled *The Existence of the United States Foretold in the Bible*—argued that the Christian democracy which the United States had inherited from Europe was destined to secure “dominion over the whole world” as the fifth great kingdom of world history which would precede the final Millennial kingdom. White Christian Americans were to exercise such dominion over other races and nature's resources. Tracing history back to the three sons of Noah, Baldwin believed that the “black” race of Ham and the

²⁹ Thomas Burnet, *The Sacred Theory of the Earth* (London, UK: Centaur Press Limited, 1965), 363. Burnet's theories attracted great attention from both critics and supporters. Even Sir Isaac Newton wrote in support to Burnet and offered his own theories on how biblical events such as the creation of the universe in six days might have been accomplished without violating apparent natural laws. Sir David Brewster, *Memoirs of the Life, Writings, and Discoveries of Sir Isaac Newton, Volume II* (Edinburgh, UK: Thomas Constable and Company, 1855), 447-454; William Whiston, *A Vindication of the New Theory of the Earth* (London, UK: 1698).

³⁰ Ernest Sandeen, *The Roots of Fundamentalism: British and American Millenarianism, 1800–1930* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1970), 22.

“yellow” race of Shem had fallen into inferiority, placing the “scepter of empire” in the hands of Japheth’s “white” race. He rebutted premillennialists directly, calling their notion of a literally restored nation of Israel “absurd” on account of both the superior “native genius” of the white race over the Jews and the natural abundance of the Americas over Palestine. How, wondered Baldwin incredulously, could the “little valley of Jordan” and its river compete with the mighty Mississippi? The sheer natural wealth which God had placed in North America likewise destined it for supremacy, as Baldwin reasoned that “in proportion to the diameter of a country’s natural advantages, so will be its intellectual advancement.”³¹

One of the most public declarations of this kind of postmillennial nationalism took place on February 22, 1857, when the minister Fountain Pitts stood on the steps of the U.S. Capitol and delivered a sermon to Congress in celebration of George Washington’s birthday. Like Baldwin, Pitts believed that the United States was the prophesied fifth kingdom, but went even further and preached that the prophet Daniel foresaw the Declaration of Independence. According to Pitts, prophetic references to “Israel” actually referred to Christian America and—after withstanding future invasions

³¹ Samuel Davies Baldwin, *Armageddon* (Cincinnati, OH: Applegate & Company, 1854), 213-214, 32, 65-67; Black theologians were obviously less eager to accept every present circumstance as proof of the approaching Millennium. Nineteenth-century Black eschatology rarely fit cleanly into the premillennial and postmillennial categories that their White counterparts debated, but critiquing postmillennial exuberance did often serve as a pointed means of challenging its often explicit White supremacy. As one minister scathingly wrote: “God is so engaged to give the world to the Saxon that He will use even the vices of their civilization to destroy the other *inferior* peoples of earth who have before been engaged to prepare it for their habitation. Again, I say, what a very useful God the Saxons have! Oh, that each of the other races had one just as good!” Theophilus Gould Steward, *The End of the World: Or, Clearing the Way for the Fullness of the Gentiles* (Philadelphia, PA: A.M.E. Church Book Rooms, 1888), 73-77.

by the English and Russian monarchies—its expansion would usher in the Millennium. That the young nation had so quickly conquered the “wilderness” of the continent offered ecological confirmation of its prophetic identity. However, Pitts gave no description of the redeemed Creation because, like Whitby before him, most postmillennialists interpreted the fiery “passing away” of the Earth as complete and utter annihilation as opposed to purification and renewal.³²

According to historian James H. Moorhead, postmillennialism at its zenith proved attractive not only as ideological fuel for nation-building, but for its ability to synthesize “an apocalyptic and an evolutionary view of time.” However, this faith in inexorable progress proved to be an “inherently unstable compound” and, after the Civil War shattered the myth of national unity, was doomed to “slowly decompose.”³³ Some of its fading strength would fuel the efforts of Social Gospel reformers across the late nineteenth century, but industrialization’s failure to produce utopia only led to further disappointment. The final blow came with the First World War as “Christian” nations deployed weapons brought into existence by the same science which was supposed to grant them dominion over the Earth to spill more blood across its face than any previous war. With its hopes dismantled, by the start of the 1920s postmillennialism appeared to have faded completely from American life.³⁴

³² Fountain E. Pitts, *A Defence of Armageddon* (Baltimore, MD: J. W. Bull, 1859), 108, 116.

³³ James H. Moorhead, “The Erosion of Postmillennialism in American Religious Thought, 1865-1925,” *Church History* 53 (January 1, 1984), 61-62.

³⁴ Marsden, *Fundamentalism and American Culture*, 92, 146.

As postmillennial fervor peaked and slowly turned to disappointment, scientific premillennialism from the mid-nineteenth century onward quietly, but steadily, gathered momentum. One of its most impressive demonstrations came in the early 1850s from the renowned geologist Edward Hitchcock, a scientist absolutely convinced that “biblical and scientific truth must agree.” Hitchcock took particular issue with the popular postmillennial teaching of the Earth’s total annihilation by fire found in II Peter 3:10-13. Beginning with the conviction that, while some prophetic passages were clearly figurative, most were “as literal and as precise in their meaning as language can be,” he contended that if any passage in the Bible was literal it must be the third chapter of II Peter. Such literalness, he reasoned, must then also carry absolute scientific accuracy within its description. Hitchcock then outlined how an “erroneous” understanding of science inevitably produced poor theology. Whereas the non-scientific theologian assumed that a flame annihilated its fuel and reduced matter to nothingness, the scientifically-trained interpreter understood that combustion merely changes the form of matter while preserving its mass. Applying this understanding to prophecy, he explained how not one atom of the present Earth would be lost in its final fiery transformation. Hitchcock’s insistence on premillennial literalism even placed him *ahead* of the geological consensus of that time as he predicted the Earth’s interior to be far more molten in composition than his peers did.

Such an insistence on the absolute harmony between Science and the Bible gave these premillennialists confidence in discerning Revelation, but also great flexibility in

interpreting Genesis. Hitchcock rejected both six-day creationism and evolution in favor of “gap theory creationism” which posits that a tremendous amount of unaccounted time existed between the first two verses in Genesis. Thus the Bible actually records *two* distinct creative episodes, between which the major geological processes occurred. Gap theory creationism would remain incredibly popular among premillennial literalists who insisted upon absolute scientific and scriptural harmony for the next century until it would be supplanted by young earth creationism.³⁵

Scientific premillennialism was not confined to universities and men like Hitchcock either. Those ministers who lacked such training took full advantage of increasingly accessible scientific publications, relying on academic journals in almost equal measure to their Bible commentaries. The reverend John Cumming, whose books sold in the thousands on both sides of the Atlantic, proudly touted the reliability of his interpretations of the basis of his diverse sources. As a lingering cholera epidemic continued to menace London and a blight spread from Ireland, he deftly wove together the reports of epidemiologists, biologists, and botanists to give his readers a well-informed account of the suffering wrought by plagues. Not only human suffering, but the suffering of plant and animal life too. Like Hitchcock, Cumming preached against the annihilation of the Earth and went even further in poetically describing the beauty and intrinsic value of the present Creation:

³⁵ Edward Hitchcock, *The Religion of Geology and Its Connected Sciences* (Boston, MA: Phillips, Sampson and Company, 1851), 371, 375-376, 391-392.

When Christ comes, this world, this earth, the round ball that we tread on, is not to be destroyed. I have often felt so vexed on hearing some people speak of the earth as a thing to be cast out like a weed and to be burned out, or to be handed over to Satan as one of his spoils and trophies for ever and ever...And why should it be destroyed? It is still an exquisitely beautiful orb. In the very tints of the petal of a flower there is wisdom and beneficence enough to serve you for a day's study; in the least habit of an insect, in the cell of a bee, in the construction of its hive, there is a lavish wisdom that man had not yet exhausted...Look at the whole [ecology] in which you live, the ocean of air that you breathe, the infinite provisions for your comfort; and why should you want this world destroyed?"³⁶

In Philadelphia, John Franklin Graff, a close friend of Charles Dickens and an ardent promoter of premillennialism, published a collection of lay sermons which incorporated scientific theories. One of these sermons presented the three “fundamental forces” of the universe as counterparts to the Trinity—with gravity as the Father, light the Son, and electricity the Holy Spirit.³⁷

Though neither a scientist nor a trained theologian himself, perhaps no writer had a greater influence over how twentieth-century evangelicals approached the Bible than C. I. Scofield. A lawyer and scandal-ridden politician prior to his conversion, Scofield became a born again evangelical around 1879 and was soon busy attending prophecy conferences and assisting premillennialists like D. L. Moody and James Brooks in their evangelistic efforts. Studying under such men exposed Scofield to an updated version of premillennialism known as *dispensationalism*. This eschatology—newly arrived from the

³⁶ Rev. John Cumming, *The End: Or, The Proximate Signs of the Close of this Dispensation* (London, UK: John Farquhar Shaw, 1855), 29.

³⁷ John Franklin Graff, *“Graybeard’s” Lay Sermons* (Philadelphia, PA: J.B. Lippincott & Co., 1877), 61.

United Kingdom—relied on a highly literal method of interpretation across both testaments and maintained a sharp distinction between Israel and the Church. This distinction has led dispensationalists to conclude that every unfulfilled Old Testament promise to the Jews will yet be filled during the final “dispensation.” Until then God’s prophetic clock remains stopped as history is now unfolding within a “Great Parenthesis.” The prophetic clock will resume ticking only after the Rapture—the physical removal of the Church from Earth—when the Antichrist signs a deceptive peace treaty with Israel and inaugurates the seven-year Great Tribulation.

In 1909, Scofield packaged this dispensationalism into his innovative *Scofield’s Reference Bible*.³⁸ By placing his own commentary directly beside the biblical text and stocking them with references to other verses which supported his interpretations, Scofield’s views quickly took on a quasi-inspired status in the minds of millions of evangelicals. Published just a few years prior to World War I, his dire premillennial commentary initially produced skepticism, but after the war’s carnage such views appeared divinely prescient and sales soon numbered in the millions. The charts and timelines which supplemented his commentary on prophetic books such as Daniel and Revelation remain standard features of dispensational sermons up to the present.

³⁸ Premillennial publications immediately gave Scofield’s Bible high praise, with one calling it “the best Bible for popular use...Every teacher and student should own one.” “Best Books,” *The King’s Business* 1, no. 1 (January, 1910), back cover; Put simply, the eschatological influence of Scofield’s Bible cannot be overstated. Religious historian Donald Akenson has called it an American “ur-text”—one so unprecedented and magisterial that “no matter how hard we try, we cannot avoid its subsequent impact...” Donald Harman Akenson, *The Americanization of the Apocalypse: Creating America’s Own Bible* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2023), 436.

Scofield's comments on Genesis also represented the dominant view of scientific premillennialists at the turn of the twentieth century—though they would not have the endurance of his eschatology. Like Hitchcock and many others, Scofield easily accepted gap theory creationism. He wrote of Genesis 1:1 that this first creative act “refers to the dateless past, and gives scopes for all the geologic ages.” Thus all one had to do was “relegate fossils to the primitive creation, and no conflict of science with the Genesis cosmogony remains.”³⁹ Notably, Scofield had little to say about the Dominion Mandate and certainly did not hint at the Creation as possessing any diminished or strictly utilitarian value. Elsewhere, Scofield would write in that contrast to the “shallow optimism” of postmillennialism, the true bounties of the Creation would remain locked away as long as sin and Satan ruled. Giving voice to the radical premillennial dissatisfaction with the present state, he wrote that due to sin: “Nature does not give up her greater forces to man in his avarice, his ruthless use of her powers, his unequal distribution of her resources. We cannot reach by imagination even a conception of the reserves of nature never to be given up except to the Heir, and the joint heirs. Till they are ‘unveiled’ and on the scene, creation ‘waits.’”⁴⁰

³⁹ C. I. Scofield, *Scofield's Reference Bible* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1909), 3-6.

⁴⁰ C. I. Scofield, *What Do The Prophets Say?* (Philadelphia, PA: The Sunday School Times Company, 1916), 5, 171.

In the broader world of evangelical books at the turn of the century, Scofield's Bible was far from the only publishing phenomenon.⁴¹ Other premillennial books, whether original manuscripts, prophecy conference volumes, or collected sermons, sold well and quickly attracted the attention of evangelical publishers. This popularity (and profitability) led to publishers promoting premillennialism—and especially dispensationalism—to readers before even the leading preachers and revivalists of the day were comfortable enough with the newly-arrived eschatology to publicly expound upon it. Some, like the Fleming H. Revell company, had been heavily advertising such titles since the early 1870s—several years before Dwight L. Moody himself would begin wrestling with the doctrine and well over a decade before he would make it a focal point of his ministry. Prophecy sold and publishers like Revell began frequently attending the growing prophecy conference movement. Publishers did so not only to *sell* books (Fleming Revell himself once remarked that he sold ten times as many books at such meetings than at bookstores) but to scout potential authors and continue the profitable

⁴¹ Scofield's Bible would remain largely unchallenged as the best-selling Bible among U.S. evangelicals until the arrival of the New International Version in 1978. Following the NIV, a deluge of Bible translations and niche editions would flood the market and erode Scofield's dispensational influence over the evangelical mainstream.

cycle.⁴² Promising sales figures led Revell to republish William Blackstone's *Jesus Is Coming* (originally published in 1878) again in 1898—spreading its premillennial message not only to lay believers, but also persuading several like R. A. Torrey who oversaw nationwide ministries.⁴³

However, premillennialism's ascendancy to becoming the dominant eschatology of twentieth-century U.S. evangelicals would not come without significant challenges from both postmillennialists and the press. When the United States called for greater civilian support for its efforts in World War I, Shirley Jackson Case and Shailer Mathews of the University of Chicago's divinity school launched scathing attacks on what they saw as the unpatriotic—and potentially subversive—nature of premillennialism. Case took the lead in publishing these attacks, describing such literalistic eschatology as not only a “violent anachronism” best left to the “prescientific age,” but also “fundamentally antagonistic to our present national idea” and an “enemy of democracy.” Case's wild antagonism led him to tell local papers that he suspected funding for premillennial purposes “emanates from German sources” and would be “a profitable field for

⁴² According to Daniel Vaca, the Fleming H. Revell company “circulated and elevated premillennial ideas more than any other company.” Vaca, *Evangelicals Incorporated*, 42; Fleming H. Revell was far from alone in this strategy as Zondervan would go on to purchase the bookstore at the popular Winona Lake Bible Conference and serve as the prophecy group's exclusive printer while fostering close relationships with its speakers. James E. Ruark, *The House of Zondervan* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2006), 38; It is also important to note that not every evangelical publisher followed this model. Notably, William B. Eerdmans—though friendly with many fundamentalists—maintained a vision of ecumenical Christianity that placed him at odds with what he saw as the “militant dispensationalists” and his company would regularly publish books seeking to expose premillennialism as a great heresy. Larry Ten Harmsel and Reinder Van Till, *An Eerdmans Century, 1911–2011* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 2011), 45, 93.

⁴³ Vaca, *Evangelicals Incorporated*, 43.

Government investigation.”⁴⁴ Even as the war wound down, Case would criticize premillennialists for giving too much consideration to the Creation when considering the effects of sin: “The apocalypticist believes that the phenomena of nature and the activities of man are so inseparably linked together that man’s sin seriously affects the welfare of the physical world.” His words took on an eerie sense of foreshadowing as he continued to mock them for believing that “the deeds of sinners result in such perversion of nature’s powers that the years will be shortened, the fields will lack their usual fertility, the rains be withheld, trees will refuse to yield their fruit,” among other ecological disasters.⁴⁵

The postwar diminishing of postmillennialism did not grant biblically literal evangelicals (now sometimes referred to as “fundamentalists”) much reprieve. Whereas pro-America theologians had accused them of disloyalty on the basis of their eschatology, soon pro-evolution journalists accused them of outright idiocy on the basis of their cosmology. The most well-known episode remains the “Scopes Monkey Trial” in 1925, yet in many ways the Dayton trial’s notoriety obscures key details. The popular memory of the trial remains largely based on the acerbic reporting of journalist H. L. Mencken, a

⁴⁴ Shirley Jackson Case, *The Millennial Hope: A Phase of War-Time Thinking* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1918), 237; Shirley Jackson Case, “The Premillennial Menace,” *The Biblical World* 52, no. 1 (July, 1918), 17, 23; Case’s accusations quoted in R. A. Torrey, “Unprincipled Methods of Post-Millennialists,” *The King’s Business* 9, no. 4 (April, 1918), 276-277; While premillennialists would eventually come to be known as a patriotic lot (though they have often been quicker to attack communism than defend capitalism), this change was gradual and took decades. Even in the midst of the Second World War, the General Council of the Assemblies of God warned their ministers against excessive patriotism: “Our being in the WAR is bad enough, but to let the WAR get into us will be a calamity...there is danger of us preaching ‘another gospel.’” J. R. Fowler, “Keeping Free From The War Spirit,” *Ministers Letters* (June 16, 1942).

⁴⁵ Shirley Jackson Case, *The Revelation of John: A Historical Interpretation* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1919), 81.

man fiercely antagonistic toward religion. In particular, Mencken found the prosecuting attorney William Jennings Bryan an easy target. Although the prosecution would eventually win its case against the teaching of evolution in Tennessee public schools, Mencken's reports of Bryan's performance would inflict greater damage upon evangelicalism than any wartime eschatological debate. Bryan's folksy insistence on a plain reading of Bible independent of any input from science struck most Americans as backwoods ignorance unsuited for the modern world. Bryan's utter disregard for any attempt to harmonize Scripture and Science effectively erased in the public's mind the decades of complex theological negotiations that biblical literalists had wrestled with since the arrival of Darwinism.⁴⁶

As the now-dominant eschatology of evangelicals, especially fundamentalists (whose first generation of leaders were all educated at leading seminaries), premillennialism likewise suffered from its perceived association with Bryan's anti-evolution argumentation. Yet Bryan was no premillennialist and his presence in Dayton was due largely to the fact that most of the seminary-trained fundamentalist leaders had

⁴⁶ According to historian David Livingstone, late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century evangelicals constructively engaged with and even accommodated evolutionary theory through methods like gap theory creationism. Livingstone describes B. B. Warfield—remembered as the father of the doctrine of biblical inerrancy—as “an open supporter of the evolutionary perspective.” David N. Livingstone, *Darwin's Forgotten Defenders: The Encounter Between Evangelical Theology and Evolutionary Thought* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1987), xii; It should also be noted that similar legal challenges to the teaching of evolution played out in numerous other states, with the leadership of the anti-evolution movement hailing primarily from northern states such as Minnesota (William Bell Riley) and New York (John Roach Straton). It was before the Minnesota state legislature in 1927 that the movement under the leadership of Riley—who held to a more accommodating day-age creationism as opposed to Bryan's strict six-day creationism—put forth its most nuanced theological and scientific arguments. However, the senate ultimately voted 55 to 7 against such efforts and the drama attracted little attention in comparison to the Dayton trial two years earlier.

already committed their summer months to attending prophecy-oriented Bible conferences. For his part, Bryan attempted to avoid eschatological debates, calling them “not a question of inspiration but of interpretation.” Bryan’s own interpretation rarely resembled premillennialism, however, as he was deeply suspicious of science. Surveying the U.S. education system, he wrote: “A scientific soviet is attempting to dictate what shall be taught in our schools...These scientists are undermining the Bible by teaching daily that which cannot be true if the Bible is true.”⁴⁷ In his career as a chautauqua speaker, Bryan’s rousing speeches commonly featured postmillennial motifs. An ardent promoter of Christian civilization, he often focused more on persuading the faithful of the *need* to build the millennial kingdom than offering specific steps for doing so. As his memoirist wrote: “But when the audience got back to earth sufficiently to inquire what practical means they could employ to produce the millennium; lo: Mr. Bryan was on the train again hurrying off to his next lecture.”⁴⁸ Unfortunately for premillennialism, there was no train to catch to avoid being branded as an “anti-science” movement in the mind of the American public.

Historians have wrestled with how best to describe the state of fundamentalism and conservative, premillennial evangelicalism from 1925 to 1945. Early accounts put forward a defeat-and-retreat narrative which saw biblical literalists driven from seminaries, denominations, and the cultural limelight—a narrative which opponents

⁴⁷ William Jennings Bryan, *Seven Questions in Dispute* (New York, NY: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1924), 9, 154-155.

⁴⁸ William Jennings Bryan and Mary Baird Bryan, *the Memoirs of William Jennings Bryan* (Chicago, IL: John C. Winston Company, 1925), 287.

(ranging from formerly-postmillennial liberal Protestants to the anti-religious) were quick to seize upon. More recent accounts have described this period as one of retrenchment, network building, and the construction of alternative institutions and subculture.⁴⁹ What is clear is that the movement's development from the Scopes trial to the final days of World War II continued at a grassroots level often far from the national spotlight. When these premillennial biblical literalist did finally reemerge, they would do so in earth-shaking fashion and riding a wave of prophetic fulfillment.

By and large, premillennialists resisted the temptation during WWII to set dates or interpret its developments as the direct fulfillment of specific prophecies.⁵⁰ More than they had in WWI, these evangelicals generally supported the U.S. war effort and they

⁴⁹ See Marsden's *Fundamentalism and American Culture* for an overview of defeat-and-retreat accounts. The narrative of retrenchment really began with Joel A. Carpenter, *Revive Us Again: The Reawakening of American Fundamentalism* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1997) and can be seen in subsequent histories such as Darren Dochuk, *From Bible Belt to Sunbelt: Plain-Folk Religion, Grassroots Politics, and the Rise of Evangelical Conservatism* (New York, NY: W. W. Norton, 2011), Matthew Avery Sutton, *American Apocalypse: A History of Modern Evangelicalism* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2014), and Molly Worthen, *Apostles of Reason: The Crisis of Authority in American Evangelicalism* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2014).

⁵⁰ Despite both the popular and academic attention that predicted dates for the end of the world have received, premillennial associations from the early 20th century onward have strenuously defended the biblical prohibition on date-setting. Those rogue prophecy interpreters who attempted to predict Christ's return during the war received harsh condemnations in its wake. In a letter to its ministers, the Assemblies of God rebuked a "misguided prophet" who set a date of May 1, 1947, and reminded them of the General Council's warning against such practice. G. B. Vick, the president of the Baptist Bible Fellowship, told the graduating class of 1951 at Baptist Bible College that any prophet claiming to know the date of Christ's return was "either a scoundrel or ignorant of the Word of God." J. R. Fowler, "Dear Fellow Ministers of the Assemblies of God," *Minister Letters* (June 8, 1948); G. B. Vick, "The Things Most Surely Believed Among Us," *Baptist Bible Tribune* 1, no. 49 (June 15, 1951), 8.

certainly filtered news of the conflict through their premillennial lens.⁵¹ In the wake of the Mikawa earthquake in January of 1945, some hoped that the conclusion of the war would come “not from B-29’s but from God Himself” and bring peace through the fulfillment of Matthew 24:7. Their scientific predisposition drove their eagerness to stay abreast of the latest developments in weapon technology—with one writer cryptically referring to a new American explosive “thirty million times stronger than TNT” months before the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki and directing readers to the Book of Revelation to see what such new power would mean for the planet’s future.⁵²

Premillennialists and the Atomic Threat to Creation

The war’s atomic conclusion and the establishment of the nation of Israel shortly afterwards appeared to fulfill two major prophecies which had previously seemed impossible to non-premillennialists: the identification of II Peter’s dissolving fire as atomic fission in 1945 and the regathering of the Jews in Israel in 1948. As one premillennial editor mused: “How strange and yet how remarkable a confirmation of the Holy Scriptures that Israel is re-established...when the engines for destruction are becoming so frightfully powerful.”⁵³ Premillennialists saw the two events as divinely

⁵¹ Although premillennialists were more patriotic in their support for WWII than they had been in WWI, they still kept up a strong opposition to runaway nationalism and fascism. Titles like Samuel Noel’s *Dictators Cannot Win: A Study of Dictators, Their Methods of Ruling the People, Their Failures and Final Overthrow* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1941) sold well and kept evangelicals on guard against trends domestically.

⁵² “The Passing and the Permanent,” *Pentecostal Evangel* (May 19, 1945), 8.

⁵³ Wilbur Smith, *World Crises and the Prophetic Scriptures* (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1950), 383.

intertwined given the immense contributions by Jewish scientists toward develop the atomic bomb which helped the Allies to win the war and subsequently issue the Balfour Declaration. In the months following the war, they lobbied for the fulfillment of that declaration as a debt of gratitude.⁵⁴ The gathering of the Jews in their homeland soon after was the more prophetically significant of the two—especially in the minds of dispensationalists—but it was the apocalyptic terror of the Atomic Age which drove public attention to premillennialism and its ability to seamlessly integrate the unthinkable into its long-held framework.⁵⁵ Evangelicals’ prophetic engagement with The Bomb and its fallout across the early decades of the Cold War would go on to shape their views of both science and nature.

In the immediate wake of the bombings, many premillennialists expressed a sense of awe over the spiritual potential of the atom and wrote that scientists were “tapping the fringes of the eternal” with their experiments. Others reconsidered the doctrine of the resurrection and speculated that the sound of God’s trump heralding that future event might harmonize with the vibrating atoms of deceased saints’ bodies and—by means of atomic physics—call them up to heaven.⁵⁶ Others gave more thoughtful consideration to

⁵⁴ “The Passing and the Permanent: Rewarding the Jews,” *Pentecostal Evangel* (November 17, 1945), 4.

⁵⁵ Even before news of the Bomb arrived, premillennialists were already pointing the rapidly advancing development of explosives as prophetic fulfillment. In May of 1945, one wrote that scientists with “inside information on secret weapons” were developing bombs with thirty million times the force of TNT. All of which meant that one should “read the book Revelation concerning what will happen to the earth in the Tribulation!” “The Passing and the Permanent: Ominous Foreboding,” *Pentecostal Evangel* (May 19, 1945), 8.

⁵⁶ J. H. Walker, “Religion and The World: Atomic Potency,” *Church of God Evangel* 36, no. 29 (September 22, 1945), 4; “Atomic Energy,” *Pentecostal Evangel* (February 16, 1946), 5.

the effects this new destructive technology might have on the Bible and the Christian faith. Wilbur M. Smith, a premillennial minister who had studied at Moody Bible Institute and cofounded Fuller Theological Seminary, preached a sermon shortly after word of Hiroshima arrived that August on what the new Atomic Age meant to the Bible. By November, Moody Press had already published the sermon as a 30-page pamphlet and soon distributed over 50,000 copies—with excerpts being reprinted in conservative evangelical newspapers across the nation. By 1948, Smith had greatly expanded on his original sermon and published his thoughts in *This Atomic Age and the Word of God*. In it he presented one of the most thorough and scientifically-informed theological treatises on what this unprecedented new source of power meant for the Christian faith and its Bible. He cited authors of classic literature, science, politics, sociology, and psychology—all with endnotes following his chapters. All in an attempt to answer the nakedly vulnerable question: Did the Bible possess wisdom equal to the threats of the Atomic Age or “is this ancient book, as we now enter on the threshold of a new age, outdated?”⁵⁷

In exploring the new age, Smith repeatedly cited earlier scientific premillennialists like Edward Hitchcock and John Cumming. One of the most surprising aspects of premillennial writing, given open-ended prophecies and sometimes completely untrained interpreters, is how consistent and self-referential the genre has been.⁵⁸ Writers

⁵⁷ Wilbur Smith, *This Atomic Age and the Word of God* (Boston, MA: W. A. Wilde Company, 1948), 13.

⁵⁸ Historian Paul Boyer admitted to being impressed by how, “in contrast to other mass-culture material, prophecy writing, even at its most outlandish, is linked to a *religious belief system*” and thus displays a surprising unity from decade to decade and author to author. Boyer, *When Time Shall Be No More*, x-xi.

were deeply familiar with their predecessors and often left visible influences on subsequent generations. Smith was even willing to put his own faith at stake on the question, wagering: “If the Bible cannot bring this help and comfort, if in turn it also fails to throw light on such a day as this, then I would be willing to grant, however agonizing such a concession might prove to be, that the Bible begins now to lose its grip on the human heart.”⁵⁹

As Smith saw it, the dilemma of nuclear power represented “the most important single problem facing the nations of the Western World” and one to which a Christian—even a fervently dispensational one like Smith—could not “simply shut his eyes and close his ears to such dire warnings.” Most premillennialists agreed with his assessment and saw atomic power as a force which “cannot be understood or appreciated” and which had been “withheld for a last challenge and warning” before the end of history.⁶⁰ However, belief in the Rapture did not leave Smith or other premillennialists careless and calloused toward nuclear war (in fact, the rapture is never discussed here). He begged his listeners to pray every day for peace lest atomic bombs shorten “the length of your life and my life, and the environment in which we shall live.” In contrast to the postmillennial view of science as merely a tool for extending human dominion over the Creation, Smith now saw humans as living “under the dominion” of science and its mysterious new

⁵⁹ Smith, *This Atomic Age and the Word of God*, 14.

⁶⁰ C. F. Wimberly, “God’s Red Lantern,” *Church of God Evangel* 37, no. 6 (April 6, 1946), 8.

weapons. He also opposed an arms race with Russia, saying avoiding it was something all “sensible men” would hope for.⁶¹

This Atomic Age and the Word of God traces the long history of the atom from its original conception among the Greek philosophers and the reception of such ideas by the early Church Fathers up through its appendixes on the periodic table to elements and the latest United Nations Atomic Energy Commission report (“Safeguards Necessary To Insure The Detection of Clandestine Activities”). Smith’s thorough and accessible research fits with David Bebbington’s recognition of the historical efficacy of evangelicalism as an effective means of disseminating new ideas. Equal to the secular press, Bebbington views Protestantism as one of the “chief agencies for the transmission of innovating ideas from the tiny cultural elite that forms them to the mass of the population that embraces them, often unaware of their origins.”⁶² However, whereas Bebbington saw theologically-trained ministers mediating between elites and the masses, scientifically-trained (or sometimes entirely untrained) prophecy popularizers bypassed this by lecturing to crowded halls and publishing best-selling paperbacks. Smith informed readers of the latest prospects for weaponizing such energy and its poisonous byproducts,

⁶¹ Smith, *This Atomic Age and the Word of God*, 12-13; Not every premillennialist shared Smith’s opinion on the wisdom of avoiding an arms race. The wide-traveling prophecy writer Charles W. Dyer once preached to a crowd in Tyler, Texas: “I AM NOT IN FAVOR OF DISARMAMENT... We should be armed to the teeth...As far as my part is concerned, drop one on Moscow tomorrow.” According to the sermon transcript, Dyer’s proposal was met by a hearty “amen” from congregants. Charles W. Dyer, “God’s Plan For The Ages,” *Baptist Bible Tribune* 4, no. 31 (March 5, 1954), 4-5.

⁶² Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain*, 271-272; Smith, *This Atomic Age and the Word of God*, 230.

telling them of an aircraft company president who had recently testified before a Senate committee on the possibility of seeding clouds with radioactive debris and making bombs themselves obsolete.⁶³

Ultimately, Smith did believe that the Bible was capable of sustaining hope in the midst of atomic dread and he located that hope within a premillennial framework. However, it was not an escapist hope and the Rapture did not appear in his book. Smith opposed an arms race as a foolish and ultimately suicidal venture. He also realized that avoiding an arms race would likely require a miracle and, failing that, international oversight and control. Yet he does not oppose such regulation, despite believing that would only move humanity “toward a world government which will involve a world dictatorship, international economic control, and the ultimate worship on the part of the greater mass of mankind of a satanically energized creature.” The inevitability of the Antichrist’s reign did not preclude support for wise safeguards and regulations in the present—even if eventually they would pave the way for the Man of Sin. Smith was able to support these things because his hope is in Christ the “creator, conqueror, and consummator” of all things, even the atomic bomb. Thus it was the apocalypse as the *consummation* (not destruction) of all things which gave Smith and fellow evangelicals their hope. The hope that “all history will ultimately terminate in the purpose of God as revealed in Jesus Christ.”⁶⁴ Echoing Smith, the *Baptist Bible Tribune* (the official organ

⁶³ Smith, *This Atomic Age and the Word of God*, 230.

⁶⁴ Smith, *This Atomic Age and the Word of God*, 313, 318.

of the fundamentalist Baptist Bible Fellowship⁶⁵) made it clear to readers from the inaugural issue that these premillennial dispensationalists were “no fatalists” and were not afraid of “the atomic bomb, of the h-bomb” or anything else. The apocalypse produced hope rather than fear as they explained: “We believe in the Antichrist, but we believe more in the real Christ.”⁶⁶

Hope in Christ in the face of the atomic threat was not merely the pious musings of seminary-trained fundamentalists, but a view their congregants clearly shared also. One of them, Edwin L. Jones, felt so compelled to share this hope that he wrote *The Church In An Atomic Age* and declared that the Gospel of Jesus Christ was more powerful than nuclear energy because “it can do things that the Atomic bomb cannot do. It can restrain men from setting off the bomb.” The publishers describe Jones as an “active Christian layman” who served as a contractor on the Manhattan Project plant at Oak

⁶⁵ The Baptist Bible Fellowship was no obscure association of fundamentalists. Historian Clyde Wilcox would declare the BBF to be the single most important religious organization in the formation of the Moral Majority, writing that “with only a few exceptions, the Moral Majority built its state and county organizations around pastors of the Baptist Bible Fellowship.” Jerry Falwell and his co-founders agreed with Wilcox’s assessment, declaring the formation of the BBF in 1950 “one of the most important events in the history of Fundamentalism” and that the fellowship’s “influence on and contribution to America’s religious heritage cannot be minimized or overlooked.” Clyde Wilcox, “Premillennialists at the Millennium: Some Reflections on the Christian Right in the Twenty-First Century,” in eds. Steve Bruce, Peter Kivisto, and William H. Swatos, Jr. *The Rapture of Politics: The Christian Right as the United States Approaches the Year 2000* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 1994), 26-27; Ed Dobson, Ed Hindson, and Jerry Falwell, *The Fundamentalist Phenomenon: The Resurgence of Conservative Christianity*, second edition (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1986), 96.

⁶⁶ Noel Smith, “The Tribune,” *Baptist Bible Tribune* 1, no. 1 (June 23, 1950), 4; Smith’s commitment to hope in the face of the Bomb was impressive and consistent across decades of editorials, but he was still human with his own fears, especially as a parent. In the most sentimental piece he ever wrote, the longtime fundamentalist editor of the *Tribune* described his last conversation with his now-grown son before he shipped off to the Navy. Smith confessed to weeping at the thought of his only child defenseless before the greatest weapon in history. Noel Smith, “And Now He’s Gone,” *Baptist Bible Tribune* 4, no. 39 (April 9, 1954), 5.

Ridge, Tennessee, and later as an observer atomic test in the Bikini Atoll. Along with this firsthand experience, Jones displayed the same kind of political neutrality that had led postmillennialists to question the loyalty of their premillennial opponents during WWI. He refused to accept the binary options presented by the emerging Cold War: “It is not a question of capitalism versus communism; democracy versus fascism; labor versus management; but of the power of darkness and annihilation versus the power of Christ and everlasting life.”⁶⁷

When postwar premillennialists gathered at their frequent prophecy conferences, themes of hope, atomic and ecological threats, and scientific authority were common. One of the widest ranging conferences to feature these themes took place in November of 1952 in New York City. Although organized by the American Association for Jewish Evangelism, the dozens of ministers and missionaries who spoke at this “international congress on prophecy”—as well as the hundreds who attended—were united more so by their shared doctrine than any organizational or ecclesiastical obligations. A sense of urgency permeated the congress in large part due to the recent establishment of Israel, but also due to prophetic developments including the arms race, Cold War tensions, increasing plagues and famines, and “the groaning of the earth’s crust in volcanic disturbances.”⁶⁸ Such developments, ominous as they were, offered new clarity for long-mysterious passages. One speaker offered a “somewhat literal” translation of II Peter 3

⁶⁷ Edwin L. Jones, *The Church In An Atomic Age* (New York, NY: World Outlook, 1947), 12-13.

⁶⁸ John W. Bradbury, “Foreword,” John W. Bradbury, ed., *Hastening The Day of God: Prophetic Messages from the International Congress on Prophecy* (Wheaton, IL: Van Kampen Press, 1953), 6-7.

which now read: “Looking for and hastening unto the coming of the day of God, wherein uranium shall melt with fervent heat.” This same interpreter also saw proposals for municipal bomb shelters as the fulfillment of Revelation 6:15’s description of the ungodly hiding themselves in caves and warned that “bacteriological warfare” would possess equally destructive powers.⁶⁹

Highlighting their attention to ecological concerns, multiple speakers offered sober assessments of rapid human population growth. Howard W. Ferrin, president of the Providence Bible Institute, pointed to the findings of researchers like Robert Cook and articles like Guy Irving Burch’s “Danger—Population Explosion Ahead.” Uncontrolled growth threatened not only global political stability, but even humanity’s ability to feed itself—as indicated by the growing problem of malnourishment. Another speaker warned that, due to such growth, the “mightiest battle” of the present in most places was the “struggle for bread.”⁷⁰ Nearly two decades before reports by researchers like Paul Ehrlich and the Club of Rome brought Malthusian warnings to the public’s consciousness, premillennialists were drawing audiences’ attention to the likely effects of runaway population growth.

⁶⁹ Herbert Lockyear, “Final Issues of the Age,” John W. Bradbury, ed., *Hastening The Day of God: Prophetic Messages from the International Congress on Prophecy* (Wheaton, IL: Van Kampen Press, 1953), 205-207.

⁷⁰ Howard W. Ferrin, “World-Wide Crisis and the Lord’s Return,” John W. Bradbury, ed., *Hastening The Day of God: Prophetic Messages from the International Congress on Prophecy* (Wheaton, IL: Van Kampen Press, 1953), 73-75; Robert G. Lee, “Christ’s Objective in the Church in View of His Return,” John W. Bradbury, ed., *Hastening The Day of God: Prophetic Messages from the International Congress on Prophecy* (Wheaton, IL: Van Kampen Press, 1953), 106.

One of the chief concerns of those gathered at the New York conference was the role that science was quickly assuming in the postwar world. Commentators, both scientific and spiritual, recognized that unprecedented man-made threats now faced humanity. William Culbertson, president of Moody Bible Institute, quoted Albert Einstein's admission that the annihilation of all life was now "within the range of possibility" and the prediction by one state governor that the majority of Americans living at that time would die in nuclear attacks within five years. Culbertson reported to the audience the findings of David Bradley's *No Place To Hide*—one of the earliest publications warning the public of the dangers of radioactive fallout. Those in attendance learned of how, for all of science's inventions, no reliable method for decontaminating radioactive sites existed.⁷¹

In the evaluation of Alva J. McClain (founder and president of Grace Theological Seminary), it was "superficial optimism" to hope that scientists themselves would be able and willing to safeguard the destructive knowledge of the atom. He presented his reasoning as such:

In the first place, it is a well-known axiom that pure science is interested only in the discovery of scientific truth, not in the possible uses to which this truth may be put, whether for good or for evil. Second, science has generally proceeded on the

⁷¹ William Culbertson, "Are the Times of the Gentiles Drawing to a Close?" John W. Bradbury, ed., *Hastening The Day of God: Prophetic Messages from the International Congress on Prophecy* (Wheaton, IL: Van Kampen Press, 1953), 42-43; Years before Culbertson's message, another premillennialist had warned readers of scientists' belief that if fifty atomic bombs—placed strategically around the globe—were detonated, "enough poison would be created to rain certain death on every living creature." J. H. Walker, "Thanksgiving Day," *Church of God Evangel* 38, no. 38 (November 22, 1947), 4.

assumption that scientific knowledge and control can solve the problems of the world. To be sure, some scientists have begun to have their doubts, but the people have become "sold" on the idea...Finally, pure science rejects emphatically all barriers to its work, whether racial, national or political; and insists upon a universal sharing of scientific secrets. This attitude alone has already led to tragic consequences, and may at last open the way for the iron hand of the final Satanic dictatorship of the end.⁷²

While not antagonistic toward the United Nations and international disarmament efforts, McClain was also not an exuberant Cold War patriot and believed that all human attempts to dictate atomic weaponry would fail. The only permanent solution to nuclear power, he believed, was the Millennial Kingdom and Christ's reign on Earth: "All power is safe in His hands." In a manifesto approved by the congress, these premillennialists declared that while the world lived "in fear of annihilation" they did not foresee utter destruction in the planet's future, but rather the "consummation of all things" as promised by God.⁷³

While premillennialism offered evangelicals a spiritual hope with which to face a darkening world, it also heightened their awareness of the degradative effects that both atomic weapons and the industrial society made possible by modern science were having on that world. In conjunction with their eternal hope, the earthly reality of atomic bombs still led premillennial publications to advertise civil defense products ranging from luxurious backyard bunkers where one could safely "live like a mole" to personal geiger

⁷² Alva J. McClain, "Significant Signs of the Times," John W. Bradbury, ed., *Hastening The Day of God: Prophetic Messages from the International Congress on Prophecy* (Wheaton, IL: Van Kampen Press, 1953), 38-39.

⁷³ McClain, "Significant Signs of the Times," 39; "A Manifesto," John W. Bradbury, ed., *Hastening The Day of God: Prophetic Messages from the International Congress on Prophecy* (Wheaton, IL: Van Kampen Press, 1953), 11.

counters and “Family Radiation Measurement Kits.”⁷⁴ The U.S. government may have been loathe to publicize the far-reaching effects of radiation, but premillennialists had no such qualms. By 1947, prophecy writers were warning readers of how “radioactive atoms thrown into the stratosphere were carried about by the wind” and how measurements taken thousands of miles from blast sites revealed evidence of fallout.⁷⁵ One in particular, a pastor named Harold Gretzinger, took it upon himself to conduct interviews and research the atomic bomb. He claimed to have received an unofficial commission from the War Department to “stir up’ church people to the perils of atom warfare” and often did so by describing for believers the “sinister” effects of the Bomb’s “radioactive rays.” These included not only burning the flesh, but also so poisoning the surrounding environment as to make decontamination virtually impossible. Gretzinger took special care to include the medical details of the “petechial hemorrhages,” ulcerations, low white blood counts, and other horrific effects of radiation poisoning on the body after the heat and blast had past.⁷⁶

As new scientific reports on the dangers of radiation emerged in the 1950s and 1960s, premillennialists were committed to passing along such knowledge to their readers. While some evangelical groups like the American Council of Christian Churches

⁷⁴ “5-Room Underground Cottage, Safe From A-Bombs, for \$5550,” *Baptist Bible Tribune* 1, no. 11 (September 1, 1950), 8; “Now Available To You!” *Christianity Today* 6, no. 15 (April 27, 1962), 33.

⁷⁵ Earl G. DeHaven, “Science and the Living Word,” *Foursquare Magazine* 19, no. 5 (May, 1947), 9.

⁷⁶ Harold Gretzinger, “No Time To Waste,” *Foursquare Magazine* 21, no. 7 (July, 1949), 8-10.

emphatically endorsed “the continuance of all nuclear tests necessary to the defense of the U.S. from foreign attack,” many prophecy writers criticized such tests as short-sighted.⁷⁷ One warned that such tests were contaminating the atmosphere and the clouds which have in turn “borne this contamination over our great cities.”⁷⁸ Others warned of hearts failing as radioactive clouds “sprinkle death over all mankind” and reported that fears of a world contaminated by fallout were driving the efforts for space travel and colonization.⁷⁹ Even as testing moved underground, prophecy writers were highly critical of those politicians driving the arms race, writing: “It would seem as though the politicians having not been able to completely destroy the earth’s atmosphere with deadly radiation are now determined to blast the earth out from under our feet. Amazing? Yes, but true!”⁸⁰ Atomic scientists often found premillennial believers receptive to their message. Ralph Overman, a Senior Research Chemist at the Oak Ridge National Laboratory and member of the First Baptist Church of Oak Ridge, warned readers of *Christianity Today* of a potential “biological chain reaction” caused by radioactivity and

⁷⁷ “American Council Endorses Tests,” *Baptist Bible Tribune* 8, no. 42 (May 6, 1958), 7.

⁷⁸ William A. Ackerman, “A Tavern In The Sky,” *Church of God Evangel* 46, no. 33 (October 15, 1955), 11.

⁷⁹ Raymond L. Cox, “A Station in Space,” *Foursquare Magazine* 28, no. 8 (August, 1955), 11. Cox would link such efforts to “climb up to heaven” to the prophecy found in Amos 9:2; Robert C. Cunningham, “When Will Christ Return?” *Pentecostal Evangel* (September 10, 1961), 6.

⁸⁰ Albert M. Blansfield, “A World Crisis and the Demands It Makes of the Individual,” *Foursquare Magazine* 33, no. 3 (March, 1960), 9.

its danger to human reproduction—though he also appealed to them (likely futilely) not to link the perceived dangers of nuclear power to their eschatology.⁸¹

The Changing Climate: A Premillennial Warning of Climate Change

In the midst of such rampant atomic speculation, a small evangelical press in Minneapolis published a book about the end of the world. However, this book predicted that rather than weapons of war it would be water—and specifically the water from the planet’s melting ice caps—that would destroy the world. Six years before Rachel Carson would warn of a looming environmental crisis and more than three decades before NASA scientist James Hansen would testify before Congress as to the reality of global warming, Arthur Bloomfield’s *The Changing Climate* warned readers that both science and the Bible confirmed that the planet’s climate was in fact changing. Bloomfield had been a Methodist pastor and the editor of the popular *Higley’s Sunday School Commentary* before leaving such duties to devote himself fully to the study of prophecy. Yet rather than leading him far from the present reality and into esoteric matters, his premillennial investigations led him to become one of the earliest writers—evangelical or secular—to seriously promote the modern scientific concern that the planet’s climate was warming and would eventually melt the ice caps.

⁸¹ Ralph T. Overman, “Will Science Destroy the World?” *Christianity Today* 3, no. 17 (May 25, 1959), 4. Overman believed that nuclear power would ultimately prove beneficial to humanity and did not want to see evangelistic efforts dampen this potential by appealing to end-times scenarios of annihilation. He also wisely recognized that the *real* debates between supporters of national defense and those concerned with radiation “are not scientific but are those involving value judgements, and values are determined by individual factors and identifications and not by scientific processes.”

Bloomfield embraced the empirical investigation of the Book of Nature as a source of truth and the pages of *The Changing Climate* are filled with quotes and references to secular research organizations such as the American Academy of Arts and Sciences and the International Economic Research Bureau among others. Along with a full color map of the Arctic depicting impending environmental changes, *The Changing Climate* warned readers of how a warming planet would soon experience stronger storms, longer droughts and heatwaves, increasing swarms of insects, decreasing fisheries, new diseases, and unprecedented human migration. Sounding much like the climatologists of today, he warned readers that a rise of two degrees in the planet's temperature would result in significant sea level rising and that four degrees would be "disastrous for mankind." However, even in the face of apocalyptic trends, he maintained a sense of humor—wryly noting that "many fish are becoming Communists" as warming seas drove them into colder, Soviet-controlled waters.⁸² Although Bloomfield said little regarding the possibility that such warming might be human-induced other than to mention the effects of deforestation, this uncertainty aligned with the science of that time which similarly had yet to settle on the anthropogenic nature of climate change.⁸³

While other premillennialists focused their attention on the establishment of the state of Israel, the atomic bomb, the deepening Cold War, and the threat of Communism,

⁸² Arthur E. Bloomfield, *The Changing Climate: The Bible Story of Water* (Minneapolis, MN: Bethany Fellowship, 1956), 4, 8.

⁸³ Bloomfield speculated that the "...whole process could have been started by man himself cutting down large forest areas and turning them into cultivation." Bloomfield, *The Changing Climate*, 5.

Bloomfield was already confident that climate change “connects with more prophecy than anything else that has happened to date.”⁸⁴ He viewed recent scientific findings as foreshadowing the prophecy found in Habakkuk chapter 3 which describes a coming great flood that will level the mountains. The warming climate was only the first stirring of this prophecy and the hydrological process would soon be greatly accelerated by the heat from the judgements mentioned in Revelation chapter 16. Additionally, he affirmed the general premillennial convictions that the Earth was “several billion years old” and would not be annihilated in the final fires—declaring it to be a planet “without end.” He even declared that science had made it quite clear that “there were forms of life on the earth before the chaos referred to in the second verse of Genesis.”⁸⁵ In concluding his book, Bloomfield directed readers to investigate the volume of work being done by climatologists and meteorologists: “Some experts have warned us far in advance what a slight change in average temperature would mean to the world. NOW IT HAS COME.”⁸⁶

Builders of Continents: A Postmillennialism Glimpse into the Atomic Age

Although postmillennialism no longer maintained a discernible presence in the American religious landscape by the time the Cold War had set in, an obscure book titled *Builders of Continents* provides a fascinating glimpse into how the boundless optimism of postmillennialism might have engaged with issues of nature and atomic power. Written

⁸⁴ Bloomfield, *The Changing Climate*, inside cover.

⁸⁵ Bloomfield, *The Changing Climate*, 21, 53-54.

⁸⁶ Bloomfield, *The Changing Climate*, 67.

by a minister named David Meldrum and displaying none of the caution of premillennialists, *Builders of Continents* billed itself as a “fictional preview of the use of atomic power for remodeling the earth.” Rather than waiting for Christ to return and renew the Earth, Meldrum insisted that “God’s greatest gift of power be used for God’s highest purposes”—the literal reshaping of the Earth’s topography via atomic power to ensure peace, prosperity, and equality.

Opening the cover of Meldrum’s book immediately reveals the Dominion Mandate in bold letters: “GOD’S FIRST COMMAND: ...replenish the earth and subdue it.”⁸⁷ At the heart of Meldrum’s story lay the belief that humanity cannot claim to have “subdued” the Earth so long as its features exist in their current, oppressive configuration. A mysterious figure (later revealed to be an extraterrestrial of possibly supernatural origins) asks the protagonist who would think humans had “subdued” the Earth so long as they were still “subject to cyclones, floods, typhoons, blizzards, and all other such manifestations of lack of control of the elements?” The figure presses this biblical observation further: “Can we claim to ‘love out neighbors as ourselves’ if we fail to take full use of our powers to provide not only land to live on but full fertility and water access to all people?”⁸⁸

Meldrum, through this figure, outlined his plan. Using limitless atomic power, the world must unite to break up Greenland—which has “one been known as a menace to the

⁸⁷ David Meldrum, *Builders of Continents: A Fictional Preview of the Use of Atomic Power for Remodeling the Earth* (New York, NY: Exposition Press, 1957), i.

⁸⁸ Meldrum, *Builders of Continents*, 176.

comfort of mankind”—and relocate its mass to a “kindlier latitude” further south. Doing so would disrupt harsh Atlantic storms from forming and produce a milder climate around the globe. The project would also serve as a model for the ultimate thousand-year task (Meldrum explicitly links this time with the Millennium) of remodeling every land mass so as to produce a uniform distribution of weather, wealth, and comfort. Armed with a postmillennial vision and atomic power, he was confident humanity would become:

...constructors of continents, builders of mountain ranges, reclaimers of waste products from the ocean, tamers of rivers, landscapers of continent-wide areas, and constructors of giant caves. He will bring equal fertility to all lands, banish deserts and icy wastelands, tame the winds and waves to become man’s servants, and bring to light for the good of mankind vast stores of wealth that now lie hidden beneath the barren wastes of deserts and ice-bound continents.⁸⁹

As for the obvious issue of radioactive pollution, the extraterrestrial figure assures the reader that increased forest preserves will purify the air while the ocean is “so vast as to make its pollution practically impossible.”⁹⁰

Meldrum’s preview concludes with a prayer. First to the Creation itself, acknowledging how human exploration has “shown to us many of thy faults and deformities” and promising (through atomic remodeling) to bring “healing to thy imperfections.” The prayer offer more pity than praise to the Creation and takes care to distinguish that such imperfections are not due to man’s sin or Satan’s power but rather so

⁸⁹ Meldrum, *Builders of Continents*, 37.

⁹⁰ Meldrum, *Builders of Continents*, 116-118.

that humans could learn to become like God in bringing order out of chaos. Then to the “Master Craftsman of the Universe,” that He would grant to these engineers power and will “in the task of bringing to realization the Kingdom of Heaven on Earth.”⁹¹

Biblical Literalism and Postwar Science

Premillennialists may not have shared Meldrum’s optimistic faith in science, but their engagement with the discoveries of the Atomic Age illustrates the continued flexibility which even the most stringently literal interpreters could employ while harmonizing the Bible with science. One of the clearest demonstrations of this can be found in Peter Stoner and Robert Newman’s *Science Speaks: Scientific Proof of the Accuracy of Prophecy and the Bible* which was published by Moody Press in 1953 and updated in 1976. Their book received positive reviews from conservative premillennial associations like the American Scientific Affiliation and the *Baptist Bible Tribune* for its application of statistical modeling to prophecy (much as John Napier had done in sixteenth century) to demonstrate the Bible’s veracity. In their review, the ASA found the authors mathematical use of probability applied to fulfilled prophecy was “thoroughly sound.”⁹²

In keeping with premillennial hope, Stoner and Newman told readers not to fear atomic weapons because “God is still on His throne.” They then took the discovery by

⁹¹ Meldrum, *Builders of Continents*, 197-198.

⁹² Peter Stoner and Robert Newman, *Science Speaks: Scientific Proof of the Accuracy of Prophecy and the Bible* (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1976), 4.

WWII atomic physicists that matter and energy are interchangeable and that matter need not be thought of as eternal as proof that “a creation did take place.” In fact, they claimed that “one by one the items of conflict between science and the Genesis account have become harmonized.” Yet along with their commitment to biblical literalism, these were not young earth creationists insisting a six-day creation. They believed a “fair estimate” of the universe’s age to be roughly five billion years—stating that Genesis 1:1 does not establish how long ago the universe was created and that Genesis 1:2 describes God “brooding” (“as a dove broods over its eggs”) over the waters and developing the elementary forms of life. They then noted that the Hebrew word for “begat” can refer to any future descendent and thus, in accordance with gap theory creationism, the biblical genealogy could encompass virtually any amount of time.⁹³

By far, Moody Institute’s most successful approach to evangelism through science came with their popular “Sermons from Science” film series. Begun in 1938 as a series of evangelistic presentations by Dr. Irwin A. Moon, these sermons were adapted to film by 1945 and distributed across the country for the stated purpose of showing that “there is no conflict between science and the Bible.”⁹⁴ With titles including *God of Creation*, *City of Bees*, and *God and the Atom*, these films relied on natural theology and scientific

⁹³ Stoner and Newman, *Science Speaks*, 5, 14, 16, 25, 55, 66.

⁹⁴ Moon’s presentations were an immediate success and attracted considerable media attention. “1,200 At Bible Session: ‘Sermons From Science’ Given at Conference Here,” *New York Times* (May 10, 1938), 16; “Moody Institute Issues Religious Science Film Strips,” *Baptist Bible Tribune* 3, no. 8 (September 5, 1952), 7; For more on Moon’s ministry as well as the rise of both scientific and apocalyptic films in service of evangelism, see Terry Lindvall and Andrew Quicke, *Celluloid Sermons: The Emergence of the Christian Film Industry, 1930–1986* (New York, NY: New York University, 2011).

observation to reveal the Gospel. A reverence for the Creation and its delicate ecology, as well as a premillennial sense of hope for the future, accompanied the message of salvation. The films were so well-received that in 1951 President Truman's "Commission on Religion and Welfare in the Armed Forces" signed a deal with Moody Bible Institute and its science division to show its films to soldiers as part of military character guidance programs. Over the next decades well over two million troops would view the films as part of their moral training before the U.S. Supreme Court's ruling with *Engel v. Vitale* in 1962 brought a halt to the mandatory viewings. The decision did little, however, to dampen the films' popularity with civilians. The films appeared in physics classrooms at state universities, attracted nearly a half-million visitors to the Moody pavilion at the 1962 Seattle World's Fair (with even larger viewing crowds estimated at the 1964 New York World's Fair), and even shared their message with those attending the 1972 Olympics in West Germany and later at the 1974 Olympics in Canada.⁹⁵

While the postwar era would inevitably spawn some diverse and frankly quite far-fetched prophetic interpretations, a core of premillennialists sought to hew as closely to textual fidelity and scientific respectability as possible. They were highly aware of the prophetic excesses that turbulent times often bred. As John F. Walvoord cautioned: "Eschatology more than any other major field of theology has suffered much at the hands

⁹⁵ F. Alton Everest, "Communication from Michigan," *American Scientific Association Newsletter* 3, no. 6, December 31, 1961, 8; "Around The World: Seattle, Washington," *The Bridegroom Messenger* 51, no. 3 (December, 1962), 6; Gareth B. Miller, "New York World's Fair," *American Scientific Association Newsletter* 5, no. 6, December 31, 1963, 5-6; "Irwin A. Moon Dies; Made Religious Films," *Los Angeles Times* (May 15, 1986).

of its interpreters.”⁹⁶ Thus these interpreters preferred to frame world conditions via pessimistic quotes from respected authorities which in turn made their interpretations appear measured, reasonable, and hopeful.

Rousas J. Rushdoony and the Roots of Christian Reconstructionism

Far from the devastation in Japan or even the newspaper stands carrying breathless reports of the new atomic age, the year 1945 saw the birth of a second revolutionary force in the remote hills of northern Nevada. However, unlike the much publicized accounts of the Trinity tests and the first unleashing of the atom’s deadly power over Hiroshima and Nagasaki, this origin story passed without notice. Death had also come to the Duck Valley Reservation and Rousas John Rushdoony, a young Presbyterian missionary to the Shoshone-Paiute, sat quietly at a funeral feast listening intently to the words of a Shoshone medicine man. “Let us go back to the old ways, the good old ways. Worship the wolf, for he is god,” exhorted the white-haired man. “Even the white man’s science tells us that we came from animals. Don’t listen to Christianity; even the white man doesn’t believe it now. They have proved it is false and the Bible is wrong.” Rushdoony did not bristle with anger or launch into a counter sermon. Instead he nodded in agreement with the assessment. As he would later tell his denomination, the old man’s paganism may have been “hopelessly dead,” but he was right to recognize that

⁹⁶ John F. Walvoord, foreword in J. Dwight Pentecost, *Things To Come* (Grand Rapids, MI: Dunham Publishing, 1958), ix.

“the white man’s culture and religion were only hand-me-down clothing rejected by himself and to be rejected by the Indian.”⁹⁷

For Rushdoony, the problem was two-fold and extended far beyond the Duck Valley Reservation. First, Rushdoony believed that white men were transforming their own civilization into a reservation and conditioning their own members for reservation life through the loss of their heritage and an “increasing predilection for a dictated economy.” This cultural neglect was itself but a symptom of a larger problem: the Church’s overwhelming emphasis on the New Testament to the exclusion of the Old Testament and its Law. Such a scriptural imbalance manifested on the reservation as the Indians inability to see Jesus as anything other than yet another great medicine man—which only led to disappointment and disillusionment. Among the broader western culture, this meant that Christianity was unable to transform civilization’s crises into opportunities and, unless it made “a full biblical emphasis” paramount, would completely lose its relevance.⁹⁸

In stark contrast to the premillennialists whose apocalyptic framework allowed them to greet even the atomic bomb with a sense of hope, Rushdoony had already soured on what he considered to be pessimistic millennialism after seeing the results of the Ghost Dance which had originated among the northern Nevada Paiutes. A laissez-faire approach by U.S. Indian agents in 1889 had allowed the millenarian ritual to spread and it

⁹⁷ Rousas J. Rushdoony, “Christian Missions and Indian Culture,” *Westminster Theological Journal* 12, no. 1 (November, 1949), 2-3.

⁹⁸ Rushdoony, “Christian Missions and Indian Culture,” 2, 8-10.

persisted until the death of its messianic prophet Jack Wilson in 1932, roughly a decade before Rushdoony's arrival. Surveying the results of the millennial ritual often "couched in the terms of Christian eschatology," Rushdoony could see the obvious parallels to the popular evangelical belief given that the Ghost Dance "preached the return of the Indian dead, the change of the world into an earthly paradise, with the restoration of animals included" and solved the problem of enemies "by visualizing their total destruction" until ultimately "the cult petered out finally in hopelessness."⁹⁹

In contrast to this hopelessness, Rushdoony—as Reformed Calvinist Presbyterian—preached a hopeful postmillennial vision. He foresaw believers actively engaging with culture and laboring to install biblical principles at every level of society in order to construct the Kingdom of Heaven on Earth. This optimistic outlook, wherein human activity was the divinely-ordained fulfillment of both the Dominion Mandate of the Old Testament and Christ's New Testament charge to "occupy" until he returned, meant that Rushdoony would fundamentally reject any notion that the advancement of civilization—especially "Christian" civilization—could result in the degradation of Creation.

Following his epiphany at the Shoshone funeral feast, Rushdoony called his congregation together to discuss plans for placing members on the local "government-controlled" school board. His vision was that of a "Christian staff, all willing to work

⁹⁹ Brad Logan, "The Ghost Dance Among The Paiute: An Ethnohistorical View of Documentary Evidence 1889-1893," *Ethnohistory* 27, no. 3 (Summer, 1980), 278, 281; Rushdoony, "Christian Missions and Indian Culture," *Westminster Theological Journal*, 6.

with the Church on a broad Christian communal program.”¹⁰⁰ Although it would take almost another three decades for Rushdoony to fully work out his vision of what would become Christian Reconstructionism, it was his time on the reservation that brought the seeds of this movement which would shape a range of sub movements including homeschooling, “Christian America” historical revisionism, Creation Science, and anti-environmentalism to germination.

Born in 1916 to refugee parents who had recently arrived in New York City, Rushdoony empathized with the Shoshone-Paiutes to whom he ministered. In Turkey, the Rushdouni family had, since the start of the fourth century, been a devoutly Armenian Orthodox family. According to family history, every generation had sent at least one son to serve in the priesthood of the Armenian Church. Rousas’ father, Yeghiazar Khachadour (Y.K.) Rushdouni had been similarly devoted until 1896 when Turkish forces killed most of the Rushdouni family, leaving the young Y.K. an orphan. He fled to the nearby city of Van where an America Presbyterian missionary named Dr. George C. Raynolds had established an orphanage. Y.K. soon converted to Presbyterianism and, when Turkish forces again threatened his family in 1915, made his way to the United States. Pausing just long enough in New York for their child to be born, the Rushdounis continued west.

¹⁰⁰ Rushdoony quoted in Michael J. McVicar, *Christian Reconstructionism: R. J. Rushdoony and American Religious Conservatism* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2015), 1.

Arriving in Los Angeles, they Anglicized their name to “Rushdoony” and had the infant Rousas baptized at the newly-formed Armenian Martyr’s Presbyterian Church.¹⁰¹

Despite an austere childhood as an immigrant son, Rousas was a voracious reader and enrolled at the University of California at Berkeley. It was there, as a student of medieval historian Ernst H. Kantorowicz, that he came to see the structures of the modern West as thoroughly rooted in historic Christian theology. Although he would repudiate Kantorowicz’s secularism, for the rest of his life he would grapple with the conviction that the fundamental problems of the modern world stemmed from a Christian faith which had given shape to that world and then refused to completely apply its biblical truths to it. By 1940 he had completed a bachelor’s degree in English and a master’s degree in education and enrolled at the Pacific School of Religion, also located in Berkeley. By 1944, a newly-married and freshly-ordained Rushdoony had arrived at Owyhee, Nevada, and would see in reservation life everything he believed awaited Western civilization if Christianity failed to reclaim its guiding role.¹⁰²

If Kantorowicz’s class taught Rushdoony that Christianity had established the modern world and the Paiute funeral epiphany had convinced him that his faith was rapidly losing relevance, then a third event in 1946 would offer him the means of formulating a solution. That March, while returning from the East Coast aboard a train

¹⁰¹ McVicar, *Christian Reconstructionism*, 20-22; Although Rushdoony refused to romanticize Native Americans and would even write harshly of indigenous cultures prior to European contact, he maintained a lifelong connection to the people of Duck Valley. The first child the Rushdoony’s welcomed into their young family was an orphaned Shoshone boy (Ronald Haig) whom they adopted. McVicar, *Christian Reconstructionism*, 26.

¹⁰² McVicar, *Christian Reconstructionism*, 23, 44-45.

crowded with rowdy WWII soldiers, Rushdoony began to read a recently-published book by Cornelius Van Til, a Princeton-trained theologian teaching at Westminster Theological Seminary. This book—*The New Modernism*—introduced Rushdoony to Van Til’s apologetics of presuppositionalism. In contrast to the more traditional style of evidentialism whereby Christian apologists employed Enlightenment-inspired rationalism to make a case for God’s existence on the basis of evidence which both believers and non-believers could agree on, presuppositionalism denies the availability of any such neutral evidence. As a Dutch Reformed Calvinist, Van Til’s understanding of total depravity and the effect of sin meant that the unregenerate mind was incapable of discerning spiritual truth and that only the *presupposition* of God’s existence could make His handiwork visible. In mulling over Van Til’s arguments, Rushdoony came to believe that it explained both the reason for Christianity’s fading relevance and its means of ultimately recovering it. The Church had abdicated its role as the source of the West’s political theology when it pivoted away from Scripture as the sole lens through which it viewed the universe toward the rationalism and empiricism of the Enlightenment. Likewise, it would only reclaim its rightful throne when it again subordinated all of nature and society to the spiritual truths first revealed in the Bible.¹⁰³

Presuppositionalism, with its radical subordination of all truths gleaned by human senses and reasoning to the Bible, would serve as the epistemological foundation for Rushdoony’s two great theological convictions: postmillennialism and theonomy.

¹⁰³ McVicar, *Christian Reconstructionism*, 34.

Whereas the postmillennialism of the Progressive Era’s “Social Gospel” had pointed to missionary successes and the victories won by reformers as evidence that Christian labor was bringing about the Millennium, his eschatology needed no such proofs. Christian victory was presupposed.¹⁰⁴ While premillennialists marshaled increasing evidence of a decaying world soon to be redeemed by Christ’s appearance, Rushdoony maintained that even if catastrophic judgement fell upon the world it would still ultimately be Christian efforts to extend dominion in the form of Biblical law over the Creation and civilization which would inaugurate the Kingdom of Heaven. This total application of Biblical law to all things comprised Rushdoony’s theonomy—which rejected interpretations of discontinuity between the Old and New Testaments. Aside from those commands which were clearly ceremonial, *all* Biblical laws remained in effect. Rushdoony’s lifelong efforts to apply these laws to all areas of life, especially education and economics, would constitute the project of Christian Reconstructionism.¹⁰⁵

In Rushdoony’s theonomic schema, individuals living in such a Biblical society would be subject to three earthly authorities or “Three Spheres”: the Family, the Church,

¹⁰⁴ The writings of Princeton theologian B. B. Warfield had initially led Rushdoony to consider postmillennialism, but it was Roderick Campbell’s *Israel and the New Covenant* (which Rushdoony recorded having read in February of 1956), that cemented his commitment to the eschatology. Mark Rushdoony, “Rousas John Rushdoony: A Brief History, Part IV: The ‘Painful Years’,” *Faith For All of Life* (July/August, 2016): 2-14.

¹⁰⁵ It is crucial to note that Rushdoony’s theonomic project did not envision an all-encompassing theocratic government to enforce biblical law. In fact, Rushdoony believed that the only biblically-acceptable tax was the half-shekel “Head Tax” instituted in Exodus 30:11-16—a relatively small tax which, if re-instituted in modern times, would shrink the government to roughly 1/11,000th its current size. Rousas J. Rushdoony, *The Roots of Reconstruction* (Vallecito, CA: Ross House Books, 1991), 63; Robert Fugate, “The Head Tax: The Only God-Endorsed Civil Tax,” *Faith For All of Life* (July/August, 2012): 4-9; Martin G. Selbrede, “Reinventing Leadership,” (September 25, 2013): 4-6.

and the State. Of these, he believed the Family was the preeminent sphere and wielded superseding biblical authority. While some of his disciples would argue for the preeminence of the Church, the State would occupy the smallest role in all strands of Reconstructionist thought. It was precisely this diminution of the State's authority which mutually drew Rushdoony and libertarian groups together. While still serving in remote Nevada, Rushdoony's reports that reservation conditions proved that government intrusion and welfare programs only "hamper and impede the man with initiative" and inevitably lead to the "rapid decline and death of responsibility and character" were appearing in the *Essays on Liberty* series published by Leonard E. Read's Foundation for Economic Education.¹⁰⁶ After leaving Duck Valley in 1953, Rushdoony began earnestly forging relationships with other libertarian and Austrian economics organizations, lecturing to university students on behalf of the Intercollegiate Society of Individualists and writing for *Faith and Freedom*—the organ of Reverend James Fifeild's Mobilization for Spiritual Ideals. Within just a few years Rushdoony had a working relationship with every major organization committed to wedding Christianity with free-market economics

¹⁰⁶ Rushdoony's report quoted in Ben Moreell, "Survival of the Species," in *Essays on Liberty: Volume I*, eds. Leonard E. Read & Dean Russell (Irvington-on-Hudson, NY: Foundation for Economic Education, 1952), 222-223.

and he was drawing special attention from the largest of these: the William Volker Charities Fund.¹⁰⁷

However, before Rushdoony could fully capitalize on these opportunities, his own Family Sphere was upended in 1956 when his wife Arda suffered a mental breakdown and was committed to a psychiatric ward. The two had met at the Pacific School and married in late 1943, less than a year before his ordination and their move to the hills of Nevada. Rushdoony himself had been delighted to settle in such a rugged locale, writing to friends back home that they were “beautifully situated here surrounded by high mountains and cradled in a small high valley...I love it here and would gladly remain all my days if God so wills.” However, such a harsh environment took a heavy toll on Arda. A social person by nature, she often struggled with the physical burdens of ministering and mothering in an often snowbound valley which only permitted easy travel and communication during the summer months. An undiagnosed thyroid condition made such labors doubly burdensome and she often returned to the fairer climate of California to visit family and regain her strength.¹⁰⁸ The heavy cost that life in the wilderness inflicted

¹⁰⁷ McVicar writes that during the Great Depression that business leaders and ministers united to defend capitalism and “downplay the effects of social constraints on individual choices. By the mid-1930s Fifiel’s Mobilization for Spiritual Ideals had taken the lead and was receiving financial support from titans like J. Howard Pew (Sun Oil), Jasper Crane (DuPont), and B. E. Hutchinson (Chrysler). Fifiel aggressively recruited ministers willing to publicly resist the New Deal’s redistributive programs and preach regularly on the 8th Commandment (“Thou shalt not steal”). By the 1950s, Fifiel’s *Faith and Freedom* reached almost 50,000 ministers and its contributors included Austrian economist Ludwig von Mises and the anarchist Murray Rothbard. It was this influential publication which “moved many clergymen to embrace SM’s anti-tax, non-interventionist, anti-statist religio-economic model.” Furthermore, it aligned with Rushdoony’s opposition to public schools and his view of government “as a problem, not a solution.”; McVicar, *Christian Reconstructionism*, 49-52.

¹⁰⁸ McVicar, *Christian Reconstructionism*, 23-25, 26-27.

upon Rushdoony's family likely only further convinced him that Creation required taming and improvement.

Rushdoony's career could have foundered along with his marriage. As Arda's condition continued to deteriorate she sued him for divorce. The Presbyterian Church USA—already suspicious of his deepening ties with libertarianism—soon forced him to take a leave of absence from his pastorate at Trinity Presbyterian Church in Santa Cruz, California. Cut off from his flock and left to care for six children on virtually no income, Rushdoony threw himself into his writing and by 1958 had published his first book, *By What Standard?*, an introduction to Van Til's presuppositionalism. It was here that Rushdoony's career began to turn around. By the end of the year several wealthy congregants from Trinity had broken away to form their own church within the more conservative Orthodox Presbyterian Church and offered Rushdoony the pastorate. He accepted and shortly afterwards received custody of all six children when a judge finalized his divorce.¹⁰⁹

Rushdoony's influence received another boost in 1961 when his second book, *Intellectual Schizophrenia*, caught the eye of the prominent libertarian Edmund Opitz. Rushdoony's account of the ideological origins of state-directed education—which he

¹⁰⁹ Even the FBI failed to find Rushdoony at fault in his divorce. As an Armenian whose family had fled Turkey through Russia and who subscribed to communist periodicals such as *People's World*, the agency had opened a file on Rushdoony. By the time they satisfactorily closed their investigation in 1964, they attributed the dissolution of his marriage entirely to Arda's "severe mental illness." McVicar, *Christian Reconstructionism*, 46-47, cites Memorandum, SAC (Special Agent in Charge), San Francisco to Director, FBI, August 13, 1964, "Rousas John Rushdoony (SOCAP) Espionage-R," 65-68503-7, 1-7; See also Mark Rushdoony, "Rousas John Rushdoony: A Brief History, Part IV: The 'Painful Years'," *Faith For All of Life* (July/August, 2016): 2-14.

identified as nihilistic and thus in fundamental contradiction to the utopian hopes of compulsory education as the means to an ordered and meaningful society—impressed Opitz who began to heavily promote him within libertarian circles. Thanks in large part to Opitz’s endorsement, by 1962 Rushdoony had moved into a full-time research position with the Volker Fund. This decision to leave his pastorate in favor of, as historian Michael McVicar writes, “the shadowy and amorphous world of midcentury American conservative activism, research, and education,” put considerable strain on his relationship to the OPC.¹¹⁰

As with his OPC pastorate, Rushdoony’s time with the Volker fund would be brief. While his commitment to applying Biblical law to economics would have meshed well with such groups’ Depression Era enterprise of justifying free-market policies with Christian principles, by the mid-1960s American libertarianism was shifting heavily away from Christianity toward secularism. Having arrived in 1962, by 1964 Rushdoony’s unrelenting commitment to theology presupposing economics led to his firing. Once again, his network of patrons quickly landed him a new position—this time in Los Angeles as a Bible teacher for the conservative grassroots organization Women for America, Inc. But Rushdoony had bigger plans than leading home Bible studies and by the end of 1965 he had secured sufficient financial support through the WFA network to establish the first bastion of Christian Reconstructionism: The Chalcedon Foundation. Later relocated from Rushdoony’s small home to land in Vallecito, California, the

¹¹⁰ Michael J. McVicar, “The Libertarian Theocrats,” *Public Eye* 22, no. 3 (Fall, 2007), 3-10; Quote from McVicar, *Christian Reconstructionism*, 45.

foundation would serve as the fountainhead of Christian Reconstructionism for the next forty years.¹¹¹

A small measure of debate surrounds Rushdoony's selection of Vallecito as the site for his foundation. In the most detailed biography Rushdoony to date, McVicar writes that one of the primary benefits offered by Vallecito was protective distance and favorable wind patterns in the event of a nuclear attack on San Francisco. However, the Chalcedon foundation and Rushdoony's son Mark have been quick to deny this—calling the information McVicar received “nonsense tailored to further discredit my father by tying him to fringe groups.” As for Rushdoony's public writings, he had remarkably little to say about the Atomic Age. Early in his career he did warn readers that they “may face a nuclear war,” but he was certainly not enamored with the postmillennial possibilities of the new power. This makes sense given that his vision of Reconstructionism saw a grassroots, family-oriented transformation of the world. Husbands were to manage “nuclear” families, not nuclear reactors. If anything, the atom would only enhance the strength of the State which he loathed. Furthermore, by the 1980s, Rushdoony appeared almost unconcerned with nuclear weapons. In a broadcast titled “Nuclear Energy and

¹¹¹ McVicar, *Christian Reconstructionism*, 79-80; Rushdoony's son-in-law, Gary North, has also provided a detailed account of his activities during the 1960s, Gary North and Gary DeMar, *Christian Reconstruction: What Is It, What It Isn't* (Tyler, TX: Institute for Christian Economics, 1991), ix-xiii; It was also during this time that Rushdoony also had his greatest opportunity for influencing the evangelical mainstream directly when *Christianity Today* financier J. Howard Pew contacted him regarding an associate editor position. Pew had been highly impressed with Rushdoony's ability to convey complex theological concepts in terms accessible by the average reader. Pew flew him in for a private meeting and everything appeared promising until editor Carl Henry harshly panned the sample article series he had prepared. Bitterly stung, Rushdoony broke off communication and retreated to Vallecito. It would not be until the late 1980s that he would again make such an attempt to join the evangelical mainstream. McVicar, *Christian Reconstructionism*, 111-122.

Weapons” he claimed to have been friends with one of the American radiologists charged with studying the Hiroshima aftermath. This scientist, he told listeners, had confided to him that “contrary to extensive propaganda, they found no correlation between any kind of diseases and the atomic bomb.” He would later give a lecture titled “The Coming Nuclear Attack”—though the use of “nuclear” here was figurative and only meant to underscore the seriousness of how tort law was being used to attack churches and religious institutions. Whether nuclear fears guided his decision to settle in Vallecito, Rushdoony did initially appear much more pessimistic regarding atomic power than other postmillennialists like Meldrum, though his overall concern with the matter would only wane as the Cold War progressed.¹¹²

Rushdoony’s Views on Science, Nature, Economics, and the Nation

Shortly after establishing Chalcedon, Rushdoony published two short books which have received little attention from scholars but which illuminate both the economic and environmental views of what would become Christian Reconstructionism. In *Preparation For The Future*, Rushdoony acknowledged that both nuclear war and a Communist takeover were possibilities, but one disaster in particular was already certain: economic collapse. Rushdoony identified inflation as the most immediate threat, but

¹¹² McVicar, *Christian Reconstructionism*, 144; Martin G. Selbrede, “First Major Book About R. J. Rushdoony,” *Faith for All of Life* (May/June, 2015), 9; Rousas J. Rushdoony, “Nuclear Energy and Weapons,” *Easy Chair*, episode 18, May 10, 1982; Rousas J. Rushdoony, “The Coming Nuclear Attack,” *Easy Chair*, episode 200, August 11, 1989; For more on the earliest years of the Chalcedon Foundation and Rushdoony’s decision to move to Vallecito, see Mark Rushdoony, “How God Provided a Home for Chalcedon,” *Chalcedon* (July 18, 2018), <https://chalcedon.edu/resources/articles/how-god-provided-a-home-for-chalcedon>.

noted that the federal government was actively addressing the problem given it would undermine their system. Ultimately, he predicted, collapse would come through the expansion of the federal government via interventionism in matters of industry and an unsustainable socialist order.¹¹³ He urged his readers to take precautions against paper money (“a mere symbol of wealth”) by acquiring silver and gold. His recommendations were to buy land (“especially productive land”) and stockpile easy-to-barter items like firearms, ammunition, tobacco, and liquor.¹¹⁴ In contrast to the passive hopelessness he saw in apocalyptic movements, he concluded with a call to action that revealed the heart of what might be called “Reconstructionist Catastrophism.” Establishing a theme which his disciples would later expand upon, he assured believers that when the unavoidable calamity came:

God shall triumph mightily. We shall share in that victory. We must prepare, therefore, not for survival but for victory. We must begin now to build the institutions for Christian liberty, to establish new and true churches, to teach the children in the fundamentals of Scripture, and to instruct them in Christian American Constitutionalism.¹¹⁵

The following year Rushdoony published *The Mythology of Science* and reframed both science and nature in light of Van Til’s presuppositionalism. He began by laying out a framework in which “History” was that recognition of God’s providential control over

¹¹³ Rousas J. Rushdoony, *Preparation For The Future* (San Carlos, CA: The Pamphleteers, 1966), 1, 4-6.

¹¹⁴ Rushdoony, *Preparation For The Future*, 2, 6-9, 15, 19.

¹¹⁵ Rushdoony, *Preparation For The Future*, 23.

the universe while “Myth” recorded humanity’s attempts at seizing this control. “Magic” in this framework was the means by which humans sought to gain “total control by man over man, nature, and the supernatural.” “Science” in turn had originally served the cause of History as “one of man’s tools in establishing and furthering dominion” as mandated in Genesis 1:28. This Science was inherently limited as it could never fully account for the active involvement of the supernatural which regularly reversed entropy and thwarted even the most fundamental of physical laws. Modern science had forsaken this role in its quest for “total control” through prediction and planning and scientists now reveled in their “status as magicians to modern man.”¹¹⁶

Rushdoony’s Science also differed from other Protestant understandings of science. Whereas natural theology saw Creation’s order and design as a second revelatory source (Two Books Theology or “The Book of Nature”) and evangelicals considered Baconian investigation to be the key to harmonizing science and scripture, Rushdoony rejected both on the basis of Van Til’s presuppositionalism. According to Van Til “science is absolutely impossible on the non-Christian principles” and therefore any investigation which began with observation rather than the Bible was doomed to fail. Factuality apart from God was absurdity and modern Science was only able to produce useful results when its practitioner “operates on secretly Christian premises while denying the faith.”¹¹⁷ He even criticized the “progressive creationists” of the ASA for their “double-revelation

¹¹⁶ Rousas J. Rushdoony, *The Mythology of Science* (Nutley, NJ: The Craig Press, 1967), 1-2.

¹¹⁷ Cornelius Van Til, *Defense of the Faith* (Philadelphia, PA: The Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company, 1955), 285; Rushdoony, *The Mythology of Science*, 44.

theory” and misguided attempts to harmonize spiritual and scientific truths. He was especially critical of the “hostility” which both secular and evangelical scientists displayed toward Young Earth Creationists like John Whitcomb and Henry Morris—authors of *The Genesis Flood* and among the few to “give serious consideration to the biblical narrative.”¹¹⁸ In an appendix, he favorably reviewed ASA scientist Thomas H. Leith’s article “The Need for an Evangelical Philosophy of Science.” A fellow admirer of Van Til and Dooyeweerd, Leith rejected Baconian science as a “figment of the imagination” and argued that while Creation revealed God’s handiwork, “because of sin His special revelation in Scripture becomes the only light by which this may be seen.” Rushdoony cheered Leith’s presuppositional commitment while decrying the ASA’s “radically anti-Christian premises” before concluding with his own thoughts on evangelicals’ Baconianism:

The inevitable consequence of [Baconianism], which made man's science independent and autonomous, was to render God only another name for ignorance or the unknown, and thus hardly deserving of faith...For this symposium, the methodology and underlying philosophy of factuality, hypothesis and rationality are those derived from contemporary science, and presuppose a system in which God is by definition irrelevant and merely a name for ignorance.¹¹⁹

¹¹⁸ Rushdoony, *The Mythology of Science*, 39, 64.

¹¹⁹ Thomas H. Leith, “The Need for an Evangelical Philosophy of Science,” *Journal of the American Scientific Association* 11, no. 4 (December, 1959), 10, 13; Rushdoony, *The Mythology of Science*, 115, 117.

As for nature, Rushdoony continued to display the same sympathetic fondness for the Creation that was evident from his Duck Valley days—a fondness that would fade in the coming years. While Rushdoony did not believe that the natural world had been created perfect and thus required the dominion efforts of Christians to fully realize its purpose, he did believe that every organism possessed a God-ordained role and none were malignant within their ecological niche. Therefore he opposed the application of modern scientific techniques to agriculture, arguing that such industrial farming entails that “competing life will be killed by herbicides and insecticides.” Echoing Rachel Carson’s *Silent Spring*, he pointed to reports of DDT’s harmful effects and lamented that no one was “sufficiently alarmed to call a halt to this increasing contamination of air, earth, and water.” The reason for such ecological complacency was that society’s faith in the modern magicians was so great that it was commonly believed “when a crisis arises, science will come up with an answer.”¹²⁰ Rushdoony shuddered to think of what he saw as a rapidly-approaching world in which scientists dictated even the paths of hurricanes and regulated human populations via contraceptives in the water supply. He warned that even human thoughts would be governed through future chemicals and electronic devices as the human—mind and body—was fast becoming “the prime guinea pig of the scientific planners.”¹²¹

¹²⁰ Rushdoony, *The Mythology of Science*, 28-29.

¹²¹ Rushdoony, *The Mythology of Science*, 19.

Rushdoony's opposition to scientific control was further intensified by his opposition to the use of the term "Nature." He considered Nature as "a self-enclosed system of causality" to be yet another myth of the modern world. In presuppositional fashion, he began with the Bible and found that it contained no such term: "It does not recognize Nature as the source and cause of natural phenomena; rather it is God directly and absolutely operative in all natural phenomena." The result of such presuppositional thinking was that the distinction between the natural and the supernatural collapsed given that God was equally active in both. The idea of nature as a self-contained universe was therefore, in the eyes of Rushdoony, "a bastard concept and must be dropped."¹²²

Lynn White Jr. and the Challenge to Christianity

While Rushdoony's *The Mythology of Science* found only limited readership, another publication from that same year was quickly making its way to wider audiences and it had not only the young Reconstructionist and his premillennial foes in its sights, but all of Christianity. On December 26, 1966, in Washington D.C. at the annual meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, Lynn Townsend White Jr., a medieval historian of science and technology, gave a lecture that would become one of the most influential in the field of science, religion, and the environment. White's was the concluding speech for the first day and the AAAS had asked if he might offer something to stimulate the audience's thinking along lines of the environmental crisis, both its

¹²² Rushdoony, *The Mythology of Science*, 96-98.

causes and its solutions. As a scholar with a reputation for being an “engaging raconteur,” he was happy to oblige and his topic, “The Historical Roots of our Ecologic Crisis,” succeeded wildly in all regards.¹²³ For rather than arguing that the roots of the crisis lay in the development of modern technologies or extractive economies, White contended that the root cause lay in the way Westerners thought about themselves and the natural world. In particular, how their religion—Christianity—led them to think about such things.

At its core, White’s argument was remarkably straightforward: Whereas the animistic paganism of the pre-Christian world had worked to curb the exploitative urges of mankind as every rock and tree held an attending spirit, the arrival of Christianity and the destruction of the sacred groves established a duality between man and nature while also commanding that “it is God’s will that man exploit nature for his proper end.” In its monotheistic obedience to a transcendent God, Christianity became “the most anthropocentric religion the world has seen” and inevitably fostered the calloused and mechanistic view of nature in Western minds that not only stimulated scientific thinking but also environmental degradation.¹²⁴ Whereas God’s initial command that humans exercise dominion over the rest of Creation had been moderated in earlier times by a responsibility of stewardship, this growing sense of separation led to an increasing ability

¹²³ Thomas Sieger Derr, “Religion’s Responsibility for the Ecological Crisis: An Argument Run Amok,” *Worldview* 18, no. 1 (January, 1975), 39-45.

¹²⁴ White would later clarify that his critique focused on a specific strand of Christianity which prioritized technological mastery over a sensitivity toward nature, but the brevity of the initial article and the bright light of publicity which it received only worked against such nuance. In the minds of many who encountered White’s thesis, it was Christianity as a whole which bore the blame.

and willingness to exploit the creation. Thus White pointed to both the Baconian approach beloved by premillennial evangelicals and the Dominion Mandate trumpeted by Reconstructionists in identifying the roots of the crisis.¹²⁵

The son of a Presbyterian minister, White was not entirely pessimistic about the prospects of ecologically-sustainable religion. He proposed that since the problem was religious, so too must be the solution. He pointed favorably to Eastern religions and Zen Buddhism in particular as mystical worldviews which encouraged harmony with nature. From within the Western Christian tradition he proposed St. Francis of Assisi as the “patron saint for ecologists.” This was because Francis labored to “depose man from his monarchy over creation and set up a democracy of all God’s creatures”—a democracy based on his own “unique sort of pan-psychism of all things animate and inanimate.”¹²⁶ However, not everyone who agreed with White’s thesis shared his willingness to mine the history and doctrines of Christianity in search of its greener elements.

White was also not the first to explore the connection between Christianity and ecological degradation. In 1949, Aldo Leopold lamented: “Conservation is getting nowhere because it is incompatible with our Abrahamic concept of land. We abuse land because we regard it as a commodity belonging to us.” The venerable conservationist saw a lack of scientific and ecological knowledge as the reason why people continued to view natural resources through an Old Testament lens. Such ignorance only produced

¹²⁵ Lynn White Jr., “The Historical Roots of Our Ecologic Crisis,” *Science* 155, no. 3767 (March 10, 1967), 1204.

¹²⁶ White Jr., “The Historical Roots of Our Ecologic Crisis,” 1206-1207.

exploitative attitudes toward nature: “Abraham knew exactly what the land was for: it was to drip milk and honey into Abraham’s mouth.” In his estimation, only sufficient secular education could overturn such views.¹²⁷ A few years later, the Buddhist philosopher Daisetz T. Suzuki painted a stark picture of the differing views of nature in the Eastern and the Western religions. As White and others would do so later, Suzuki found the Dominion Mandate particularly troubling. The Bible begins, he wrote, with the command that “nature was to be dominated by Man”—a command which he believed was “the real beginning of human tragedy.”¹²⁸

In 1964 Arend Van Leeuwen put forward a lengthy and impressive interpretation of Christianity and technology. Whereas originally pagan and Eastern cultures had viewed nature “ontocratically” as part of an interconnected cosmos, the Genesis narrative introduced a “theocratic” view whereby nature was disentangled from both its Creator and its human manipulators. Despite removing the harmonizing orientation of ontocracy, science in the West was still able to check its most destructive impulses through principles of stewardship over God’s creation. However, with spread of secularism, this final safeguard was removed and, according to Leeuwen, the result is that now “modern science and technology tread the very brink of nihilism.”¹²⁹ Working in the opposite direction, French philosopher Jaques Ellul challenged “popular sociology” which held

¹²⁷ Aldo Leopold, *A Sand County Almanac and Sketches Here and There* (London, UK: Oxford University Press, 1949), viii, 204-205.

¹²⁸ Daisetz T. Suzuki, *Studies in Zen* (New York, NY: Dell Publishing, 1955), 178;

¹²⁹ Arend Van Leeuwen, *Christianity in World History: The Meeting of the Faiths of East and West* (New York, NY: Scribner’s Sons, 1966), 329-333.

Christianity responsible for the West's propensity for conquest and "turning nature into profit." According to Ellul, early Christian apocalypticism and cenobitism—along with the moral condemnation of luxury and money—meant that the faith did far more to discourage the development of technology than encourage it. The impetus for Western technology actually came *from* the East to "a world which had already withdrawn from the dominant influence influence of Christianity."¹³⁰ However, none of these arguments provoked the widespread and enduring interest that White's did.

Others would quickly follow White's lead in condemning Christianity for its ecological sins. Leo Marx took up the accusation that Christianity's "special contribution" to the United States' ethos of expansionism was an "aggressive, man-centered attitude toward the environment" in which every part existed only to serve humanity.¹³¹ (Rushdoony, a voracious reader and ardent postmillennial proponent of Manifest Destiny, likely read such an assessment with a nod of approval.) The Scottish architect Ian McHarg published perhaps the most caustic attack. Like White he agreed that "the emergence of monotheism had as its corollary the rejection of nature," though he went further in stating this rejection was for all practical purposes "a declaration of war on nature." The same Dominion Mandate which Rushdoony cherished, McHard declared "an ancient deformity...that we can no longer tolerate." In considering the ever-increasing list of ecological maladies, he could only conclude:

¹³⁰ Jacques Ellul, *The Technological Society*, translated from French by John Wilkinson (New York, NY: Vintage Books, 1964), 32-38.

¹³¹ Leo Marx, "American Institutions and Ecological Ideals," *Science* 170, no. 3961 (November 27, 1970), 948.

Indeed, if one seeks license for those who would increase radioactivity, create canals and harbors with atomic bombs, employ poisons without constraint, or give consent to the bulldozer mentality, there could be no better injunction than this text. Here can be found the sanction and injunction to conquer nature—the energy, the threat to Jehovah.¹³²

McHarg would later issue a direct rebuke of what he saw as White's naive hope for the revival of St. Francis and his creaturely democracy. In a lecture before the U. S. Department of Agriculture, he explained: "Dominion is not a negotiating term. You cannot love anything, as St. Francis did, and have dominion over it." He then assured his audience that his views were not born of anti-religious sentiment but were shared by leading theologians. The Dominion Mandate of Genesis, he declared, possessed only "extinction value" for humanity.¹³³

Still, it was the simplicity of White's thesis that drove its popularity and elevated its profile above similar arguments. Versions of his essay appeared in publications including *The Boy Scout Handbook*, *Time Magazine*, and *The New York Times*. It appeared even in uncredited form when grandiose thinkers like Arnold Toynbee repeated the White thesis nearly verbatim (though somehow with even less nuance) and claimed that the origins of modern pollution could be traced back to the "rise of monotheism." Yet it was with the approach of the first Earth Day in 1970 that White's thoughts received

¹³² Ian McHarg, *Design With Nature* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1969), 26.

¹³³ Ian McHarg, *Man: Planetary Disease* (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Agriculture, 1971), 6, 8.

their broadest exposure. When the leadership group Friends of the Earth assembled their instructional guide for the momentous day, *The Environmental Handbook*, they featured White's article prominently, placing it immediately after the volume's introductory material.¹³⁴ For many Americans, participation in the inaugural Earth Day meant exposure to the arguments found in "The Historical Roots of Our Ecologic Crisis."

Finally, it is important to note that White's presentation took place at a gathering of scientists and was first published in a scientific magazine. When White took the stage it had only been four years since ecologists like Murray Bookchin (*Our Synthetic Environment*) and Rachel Carson (*Silent Spring*) had begun to reveal the malevolence latent within many scientific advancements. Yet in that short time a wave of similar books had already appeared, with some questioning whether science was as wholly beneficent as it billed itself and other openly warning the public of apocalyptic potential some advancements carried.¹³⁵ Science and its practitioners were under attack. The curtain was being rapidly pulled back on Rushdoony's "magicians." For those scientists who heard White's novel and uncomplicated thesis, the opportunity to paint Christianity as the ecological scapegoat must have appeared as a lifeline.

¹³⁴ Arnold Toynbee, "The Genesis of Pollution," *New York Times*, September 16, 1973, 15; Lynn White Jr., "The Historical Roots of Our Ecologic Crisis," in *The Environmental Handbook: Prepared For The First National Environmental Teach-In*, ed. Garrett De Bell (New York, NY: Ballantine Books, 1970), 12-26.

¹³⁵ Murray Bookchin, *Our Synthetic Environment* (New York, NY: Harper Colophon Books, 1962); Rachel Carson, *Silent Spring* (Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin, 1962).

2: THE PROPHECY EXPLOSION: THE 1970S AND THE FLOWERING OF EVANGELICAL ENVIRONMENTALISM

In the standard telling of religious environmentalism's development, historians and activists have tended to view Lynn White's thesis as the intellectual spark which grew into the widespread participation by Americans of all faiths (even fundamentalists) in the 1970 Earth Day celebration. However, a number of religious traditions, including evangelicals, had already recognized the signs of a growing environmental crisis prior to White's argument. Conservative evangelicals had been exploring the theological implications of a damaged Creation and the science that was facilitating its destruction since the end of WWII. As a natural outgrowth of their concern for atomic testing, radioactive fallout, and the authority being increasingly invested in scientists, premillennialists were already developing an awareness of pollution, overpopulation, and an undemocratic shift toward unquestioned scientific authority well before the inaugural Earth Day.

Premillennialists and the Pollution Threat to Creation

Years before the warnings of Carson and Ehrlich, premillennialists were lamenting those cities that had "turned their sewage into the rivers" and surrounded themselves with pollution.¹ In 1960 the editors of *Christianity Today* thanked God for the

¹ J. Narver Gortner, "Peace As A River," *Pentecostal Evangel* (April 26, 1953), 4.

“unpolluted air we breathe”² in Thanksgiving prayer, yet within only a few years pollution threatened even their ability to give thanks. That year’s Thanksgiving poem now instructed believers in “How Not to Give Thanks”:

BY DESPOILING NATURE, WHICH IS A GIFT OF GOD

By killing our wildlife and polluting our streams.

By poisoning our air and burning our forests.

By littering our highways and disfiguring them with hideous signboards.

By contaminating our atmosphere with atomic waste materials and blanketing the earth with fallout.³

While the most common references to pollution by evangelicals were in the context of moral purity (with one writing that the “pollution of air and water is a small thing compared with the pollution of men’s minds” by pornography⁴), the fact that they found environmental pollution to be such an apt metaphor for the most pressing concern of the day (maintaining personal piety) demonstrates that evangelicals did consider the ecological crisis to be a legitimate crisis. In particular, premillennialists in the years leading up to Earth Day were deeply concerned with the state of the nation’s rivers.

² “The Lost Grace of Thanksgiving,” *Christianity Today* 5, no. 3 (November 7, 1960), 24.

³ “How Not to Give Thanks,” *Christianity Today* 11, no. 4 (November 25, 1966), 26; The act of giving thanks would continue to drive ecological concern among evangelicals as *Eternity* magazine would later ask how one could “truly be thankful for the ‘life-giving’ rains when they carry with them radioactive pollutants which threaten the very existence of life on earth?” Ron Widman, “When You’ve Seen One Beer Can You’ve Seen Them All,” *Eternity* 21, no. 5 (May, 1970), 14, 16.

⁴ Russell J. Fornwalt, “Pollution of Moral Waters,” *Christianity Today* 10, no. 3 (November 5, 1965), 11.

Evangelicals from their earliest days in North America had a special fondness for rivers and streams. As historian Brett Malcolm Grainger has noted, evangelicalism—especially its revivalistic and pietistic strands—was a movement “born in field, forest, and stream.” Often centered around bodies of water wherein they enacted collective rites such as baptism, evangelicals practiced a devotion to nature based on “vital piety” and the conviction that Christ “enlivened” the Creation which Grainger claims grew to become the most popular form of nature spirituality in America by the nineteenth century.⁵

This impulse to return to the waters remained strong among conservative, apocalyptically-minded evangelicals as they sought out unpolluted campgrounds on the banks of the Niagara River and Winona Lake to host their largest and most enduring prophecy conferences. In the fractious decades surrounding the Fundamentalist-Modernist controversy, premillennialists regularly remarked that such summer gatherings amidst the beauty of Creation produced a spirit of cooperation among the various denominations which rarely manifested in urban environments.⁶ As pollution continued to worsen following WWII, these evangelicals insisted that a healthy environment was crucial for the spiritual development of the youngest believers and that every child had a

⁵ Brett Malcolm Grainger, *Church in the Wild: Evangelicals in Antebellum America* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2019), 2-3.

⁶ The Niagara Bible Conference met annually from 1876 to 1897 and served as one of the most effective disseminators of dispensational premillennialism in 19th-century America. Similar conferences were held at Winona Lake beginning in 1894 and continuing annually into the late 1940s. Grace College, an institution committed to dispensational premillennialism, purchased the campground in 1948 and conferences continue on a sporadic basis up to the present.

“divine right” to swim in clean water and enjoy “the vision of pure skies.” A world-weary Noel Smith expressed a common evangelical sentiment when he wrote that he had been “civilized to death” by modern industrial society and that he would prefer to “do away with civilization and start all over again at the river.”⁷

Across the 1950s and early 1960s, evangelicals sporadically mourned the nation’s dying rivers, often reprinting reports from national papers on the polluted conditions of lakes like Erie and rivers like the Cuyahoga. These concerns coalesced in late 1965 following President Lyndon B. Johnson’s remarks at the Water Emergency Conference. Johnson remarked to the gathered officials and state governors that the condition of the nation’s waterways was “disgraceful” and that he could “hardly go down [to the Potomac] without reflecting and wondering why we have been so shortsighted these years.”⁸ Newspapers would later misquote Johnson slightly, reporting that he had called the Potomac a “national disgrace,” but the president’s message struck a chord with conservative evangelicals.

With their editorial offices located in Washington D.C., the staff at *Christianity Today* were also well aware of the polluted Potomac and soon began relaying the president’s concern to readers. A few months later the *Saturday Evening Post* published an article by John Bird titled “Our Dying Waters” in which Bird described the Mississippi River as the “colon of mid-America” and pleaded for concerned citizens to “save our

⁷ “The Art of Teaching,” *The Bridegroom Messenger* 55, no. 5 (April, 1967), 3-4; Noel Smith, “News and Comments,” *Baptist Bible Tribune* 2, no. 10 (September 28, 1951), 4.

⁸ Lyndon B. Johnson, “Remarks at the Signing of the Water Quality Act of 1965,” *The American Presidency Project*, <https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/node/241304>, accessed July 29, 2022.

national heritage” also proved popular with evangelical readers. The fact that Johnson had attributed polluted waters to “carelessness and selfishness” while Bird agreed that “recklessness and greed” were the root causes aligned well with the evangelical conviction that—as *Christianity Today* summarized—all ecological degradation “goes back to sin—in this case selfishness and irresponsibility.” By July of 1967 (five months before White would give his lecture), the flagship publication of conservative evangelicalism was sounding a call to action on the issue of water pollution:

The contamination of our waters is more than an aesthetic matter. A dirty river does not simply defile the landscape; it also menaces life and health...God commanded Adam to subdue and cultivate the earth, not to despoil and ruin it. It becomes a matter of Christian as well as national concern when our physical environment is progressively spoiled through a callous disregard of the responsibility to preserve and pass on undefiled our God-given natural resources. Surely the time is long overdue for Americans, and especially Christians, who ought to exercise their stewardship of God's creation, to wake up and do something about the pollution of our waters.⁹

Even the most conservative and fundamentalist branches of evangelicalism were expressing their growing concern with pollution not just in the heart of the nation's capital, but in its most distant and barren landscapes. Following a meeting of Baptist Bible Fellowship pastors and missionaries in Alaska, Smith reported back with harsh condemnations of recent oil sales in the region. He wrote that he and his fellow fundamentalists were “not impressed” by the sales and knew that it was only a matter of time before “the hordes who will begin to flock to Alaska will pollute the air and blacken

⁹ “Water Is No Luxury,” *Christianity Today* 10, no. 20 (July 8, 1966), 25-26.

the snow and foul the waters.”¹⁰ By the time Earth Day arrived, premillennialists were already formulating their own uniquely piety-oriented ethic of environmentalism: “Man is ever the pollutant; God is ever the detergent.”¹¹

Evangelicals pious and premillennial concern for rivers and pollution was not a passive one, however. By 1967 they saw air pollution as possibly the fulfillment of biblical prophecy—with experts predicting that humans might soon be forced to choose between living underground or in domed cities—but these believers preferred a third option: “We can take action to stop fouling the air we breathe.”¹² Even the Baptist Bible Fellowship, while passing along news of the burning Cuyahoga to their readers, stated that such issues were “clearly within the domain of the federal government” and demanded that it take action.¹³

Such calls to action were not restricted to mere rhetoric. On the eve of the 1968 presidential election *Christianity Today* implored evangelical voters to reflect deeply upon the candidates and ask themselves: “Who offers the most constructive options for dealing with the great problems of urban overcrowding, air and water pollution, and

¹⁰ Noel Smith, “The Fellowship In Alaska,” *Baptist Bible Tribune* 20, no. 13 (September 26, 1969), 6; Even the most hardboiled fundamentalist like Smith cared not only for the conditions of “barren arctic land,” but also delighted in the wonders of animal life. When the *Tribune* was not reviewing the latest works of theology, Smith’s favorite titles to pass along to readers were those exploring the mysteries of God’s Creation and its many creature. In a two-page review devoted to Maurice Maeterlinck’s *The Life of the Bee*, Smith exclaimed that it was one of the “most beautiful and fascinating books ever written.” Noel Smith, “The Bees: They Dance & Follow The Sun Rays,” *Baptist Bible Tribune* 5, no. 9 (September 10, 1954), 1, 8.

¹¹ “At the Root of Earth’s Sickness is Man,” *Eternity* 21, no. 5 (May, 1970), 10.

¹² “Prophecy: Even the Air We Breathe Is Foul,” *The Bridegroom Messenger* 55, no. 6 (May, 1967), 7.

¹³ “A Chilling Warning From Lake Erie,” *Baptist Bible Tribune* 18, no. 14, October 6, 1967, 6.

conservation of our natural resources?"¹⁴ A decade before the Moral Majority and the emergence of anything resembling the Religious Right, even traveling evangelists were well aware of the power that a "turned on" evangelical voting bloc could wield against issues like pollution. As Lon Woodrum—a "poet evangelist" from Michigan—imagined in a fictional piece mimicking C.S. Lewis' famous *The Screwtape Letters*, politically-motivated and environmentally-conscious evangelicals could throw quite a wrench in Satan's plan. In his well-received story, a demon underling reported to his superior:

Newspapers report that men will run into more and more power shortages if they aren't careful—and, take it from me, few of them are careful at this point! They also fear a water shortage, and what water they have is fairly well polluted. The air is pretty awful, too. And, of course, there's the great food shortage...One thing bugs me, however...The evangelicals may be at it again!...Sounded a bit like some far-left folks—except they stuck to the idea that to have a new society you had to have some new men. It was all pretty impressive, take it from me. All the big news media gave them a hefty play...Don't forget, there are millions of them. Imagine what could happen if they all got turned on."¹⁵

Evangelicals wanted to see political action with the issue of pollution, but they wanted this politics to be grounded in democratic principles as opposed to the growing postwar trend toward an unquestioned authority wielded by scientists. These evangelicals were certainly not anti-science and certainly not opposed to the environmental sciences. By 1951 their colleges offered courses examining "the problems of environment, disease, and conservation" and premillennial denominations like the Church of God promoted

¹⁴ "A Country At The Crossroads," *Christianity Today* 13, no. 1, October 11, 1968, 27.

¹⁵ Lon Woodrum, "If Dropouts Turn On," *Christianity Today* 14, no. 2 (October 24, 1969), 18-19.

ecology as something of which “every minister, Christian worker, or lay member must have a basic knowledge.”¹⁶ What concerned them was *scientism*, which they were always careful to distinguish from proper science which respected democratic principles and was, at the very least, neutral toward Christianity. As one popular prophecy writer explained, “the scientist who deals with the most profound questions of faith and theology, while at the same time arbitrarily discarding the whole of supernatural Christianity, has departed from science into scientism.”¹⁷ Another wrote that science which was “contained within its objective boundaries” was a great benefit to human life, but this flourishing could be threatened by “the idolatrous enthronement of science as the final judge of all truth...the ultimate hope for the redemption of mankind.”¹⁸ Others worried that scientism was replacing secular humanism as the “major competitor” of the Gospel.¹⁹

When the 1960s began, *Christianity Today* asked a panel of evangelicals leaders to identify the coming decade’s greatest idols and many nodded toward unchecked science. Carl F. H. Henry placed scientism on par with communism as one of “man’s warped passions to shape a paradise on earth.” Other panelists agreed and Leon Morris of Tyndale House responded: “The ideal of scientific achievement attracts multitudes to its

¹⁶ Ralph E. Williams, “Lee College,” *Church of God Evangel* 42, no. 1 (March 3, 1951), 7.

¹⁷ Frank E. Gaebelain, “Review of Current Religious Thought,” *Christianity Today* 4, no. 7 (January 4, 1960), 44,

¹⁸ Robert H. Lauer, “The Failure of Science,” *Christianity Today* 6, no. 16 (May 11, 1962), 17-18.

¹⁹ John W. Snyder, “Christians in the Academic Arena,” *Christianity Today* 13, no. 1 (October 11, 1968), 10.

shrine...No generation had as much to fear from the results of scientific research.”²⁰ Calvin D. Linton, who served as a dean at George Washington University, surveyed the destruction wrought by science run amok, going so far as to call it “the malady of our age, and one of which we may perish.”²¹ Despite these fears, others cautioned their fellow believers against succumbing to anti-intellectualism and insisted, as one evangelical geology professor did, that any legitimate and appealing form of Christianity must be “an informed and tenable one.”²² Evangelical theologians were also properly critical of their own profession as well, cautioning that while scientists should avoid making theological statements, the theologian was equally guilty when “he gives the impression that he is speaking as a trained scientist.”²³

Francis Schaeffer’s Evangelical Ecotheology

Given such prior engagement with the environmental crisis and the role science in society, conservative evangelicals were not caught completely off guard by White’s

²⁰ Carl F. H. Henry, “Scholars’ Panel Identifies Contemporary Idols,” *Christianity Today* 6, no. 1 (October 13, 1961), 38-39.

²¹ Calvin D. Linton, “Higher Education: The Solution—Or Part of the Problem?” *Christianity Today* 12, no. 10 (February 16, 1968), 6.

²² “Eutychus and His Kin,” *Christianity Today* 9, no. 10 (February 2, 1965), 24.

²³ Carl F. H. Henry, “The Temptation of the Specialist,” *Christianity Today* 8, no. 18 (June 5, 1964), 28; By the end of the decade, such warnings would take on greater urgency as *Christianity Today* alerted ministers that science and religion were increasingly crossing paths and a host of new issues demanded relevant responses from evangelicals: “The population explosion demands both scientific and moral answers. So does birth control. Space exploration. Hunger. Pollution. Organ transplants. Genetic experimentation. Behavior manipulation. Poverty. And a thousand other problems.” Carl F. H. Henry, “A Dangerous Intersection,” *Christianity Today* 13, no. 23 (August 22, 1969), 23.

famous charge. Unfortunately, these early ventures in religious environmentalism by conservative evangelicals have gone largely unnoticed by accounts which have moved quickly along a narrative arc which begins with White's thesis, culminates with Earth Day 1970, and—if focused on evangelicals—sees Francis Schaeffer's *Pollution and the Death of Man* as the first and only serious attempt at an evangelical eco-theology. Though Schaeffer's book was not the first serious evangelical engagement with the environmental crisis and certainly would not be the decade's last, scholar Melanie Gish was right to call it "the most encompassing and direct response to the 'White thesis' penned by an evangelical in the 1970s."²⁴ However, like his counterparts, Schaeffer had been considering how evangelicals might approach ecological issues for years prior to White's argument.

Few theologians did more to shape evangelical thinking over the second half of the twentieth century and give it an air of intellectual respectability than Francis Schaeffer. Schaeffer began his career as the protégé of the militant separatist Carl McIntire (founder of the American Council of Christian Churches—the fundamentalist response to the ecumenical National Council of Churches) and shortly after the war began making survey trips to Europe in preparation of establishing McIntire's organization on the continent. By 1955, Schaeffer had arrived with his family in Switzerland and had severed ties with McIntire and his culturally-withdrawn style of fundamentalism. For the next several years were a period of intense study and reflection

²⁴ Melanie Gish, *God's Wounded World: American Evangelicalism and the Challenge of Environmentalism* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2020), 37.

for Schaeffer as he read voraciously (including the early works by Rushdoony) and sought to develop a philosophically-rigorous form of evangelicalism capable of actively engaging with the problems of modernity. The Schaeffers put their ideas into practice as they opened their L'Abri home to every seeker and vagabond who visited their village and quickly became a sensation in the evangelical world. *Christianity Today* featured the Schaeffer's family ministry and Francis' writings quickly found an audience among American evangelicals eager to see their grassroots faith connected to the wider trajectory of Western history and moored to philosophical arguments that made even unbelievers take notice. In 1964, he accepted an invitation to speak at American colleges including Harvard and Boston University and with that a lederhosen-clad Schaeffer returned to the United States for the first time in almost a decade.²⁵ Yet overlooked in biographies of Schaeffer has been the ecological ruin he encountered in the United States and the deep impressions it left on his mind.

While traveling the United States, Schaeffer had a fateful encounter with an ecologist named David B. Wingate. He was startled to learn from Wingate, who had successfully led programs to bring the Bermuda petrel back from the brink of extinction before watching the bird's population plummet again, that land-based DDT use was "polluting the whole sea" as the chemical flowed from rivers out into open waters and poisoned the sea-feeding birds. Shortly after this Schaeffer came across a tombstone

²⁵ For a biography of Schaeffer's life and an overview of his theology, see Barry Hankins, *Francis Schaeffer and the Shaping of Evangelical America* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 2008).

placed on a California beach memorializing the “death” of the ocean and reading: “The Lord gave, man hath taken away; Cursed be the name of man.”²⁶ Even after returning to Switzerland, ensconced at his picturesque L’Abri chateau, Schaeffer continued to be disturbed by the encroaching bulldozers and dying waters he saw around him. Amidst the ominous groans of Creation, he began the task of uncovering an eco-theology befitting the evangelical tradition. In the spring of 1968, he preached a sermon on “Ecology from a Christian Viewpoint” to an audience of nearly five hundred evangelicals attending a conference he and wife Edith hosted there at L’Abri.²⁷ His first published attempt appeared in 1969 with *Death In The City*, a study of modernity’s alienating effects. Modern living, he wrote, had separated people from God, from their own inner life, from others, and from nature (resulting in “the ecological problems”) and all were in need of healing.²⁸ It was this process of healing humanity’s alienation from nature which he would develop further in *Pollution and the Death of Man*.

Schaeffer welcomed White’s challenge, calling it a “brilliant” argument and one which took the effects of worldviews seriously.²⁹ He disagreed that the ecological crisis

²⁶ Francis Schaeffer, *Pollution and the Death of Man: The Christian View of Ecology* (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House, 1970), 9-10.

²⁷ Edith Schaeffer, *The Tapestry: The Life and Times of Francis and Edith Schaeffer* (Waco, TX: Word Books, 1981), 463.

²⁸ Francis Schaeffer, *Death In The City* (Downers Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity Press, 1969), 86.

²⁹ Schaeffer, *Death In The City*, 12. Schaeffer was exceptionally gracious in praising White’s insights despite disagreeing with his conclusions. This stands in contrast to many of the responses White received even from humanist ecologists like René Dubos, who called White’s thesis “at best a historical half-truth” and chided both his religious and secular counterparts for often uncritically accepting it as “an article of faith.” René Dubos, *A God Within* (New York, NY: Scribner’s Sons, 1972), 157-158.

was a result of Christianity producing a mechanistic and exploitative form of science and instead argued that it has been Christianity's failure to find "joy" in nature that was "leading to the death of nature itself."³⁰ According to Schaeffer, Christians ought to delight in the natural world given that matter possessed intrinsic value due to the doctrines of creation, incarnation, and bodily resurrection. Thus the environmental ethic Schaeffer proposed attempted to balance the anthropocentrism *and* creatureliness found in the Bible. He was careful to begin such a discussion by clarifying that unlike the pantheistic view, "creation is not an extension of the essence of God." Created things thus have an independent existence and are "really there." As for humans, despite their unique status within the Creation, given that all things were created from nothing, all things are "equal in their origin."³¹ He wrote:

As a Christian I say, "Who am I?" Am I only the hydrogen atom, the energy particle extended? No, I am made in the image of God. I know who I am. Yet, on the other hand, when I turn around and I face nature, I face something that is like myself. I, too, am created, just as the animal and the plant and the atom are created.³²

Even when Schaeffer published *How Should We Than Live?* in 1976 and began pivoting back toward his more fundamentalist roots, he still maintained a strong defense against the White thesis—arguing that early Christians and those of the Reformation did not

³⁰ Schaeffer, *Pollution and the Death of Man*, 11-12.

³¹ Schaeffer, *Pollution and the Death of Man*, 47-48.

³² Schaeffer, *Pollution and the Death of Man*, 51.

destroy sacred groves and icons because they minimized nature or art, but because they did not live in the same mental "splintered world" that modern man takes for granted.³³

Historian Axel Schäfer has examined how evangelicals of the 1960s and 1970s created their unique counterculture in opposition to consumerist materialism³⁴ and here Schaeffer exemplifies just how strongly conservative evangelicals could diverge from the American mainstream:

...the hippies do understand something. They are right in fighting the plastic culture, and the Church should have been fighting it, too, a long, long time ago, before the hippies ever came onto the scene. More than this, the hippies are right in the fact that...the mechanistic world view in university textbooks and in practice, the total threat of the machine, the establishment technology, the bourgeois upper middle-class mentality—is poor in its sensitivity to nature. This is totally right.³⁵

Much like the hippies, Schaeffer encouraged evangelicals to avoid unnecessary destruction on even the smallest of scales—preaching them that one should not carelessly cut down a tree or step on an ant or strip the moss from a rock. Each of these “has a right

³³ According to Schaeffer, the holistic worldview of the Reformers meant that there was no distinction between art and religion or between the ecological and the spiritual. Thus they “did not cut down the trees because they minimized trees or despised nature; they cut down these specific trees because of their anti-Christian religious significance.” Francis Schaeffer, *How Should We Then Live?: The Rise and Decline of Western Thought and Culture* (Old Tappan, NJ: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1976), 89.

³⁴ Axel Schäfer, *Countercultural Conservatives: American Evangelicalism From the Postwar Revival to the New Christian Right* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 2011), 72-73, 128-129.

³⁵ Schaeffer, *Pollution and the Death of Man*, 24.

to live. It is equal with man as a creature of God.” Such actions only promote a “bulldozer” mentality which leaves nature barren and increases human suffering.³⁶

Such a calloused attitude also threatened to hinder evangelistic efforts among the increasingly ecologically-minded youth. In Schaeffer’s eyes, the Church had already “missed the opportunity to help man save his earth” and now could not blame those who found the hippies more appealing than Christians who “simply do not care about the beauty of nature.”³⁷ In fact, it was often those evangelists specifically engaged with youth culture who displayed the greatest sensitivity to ecological issues. Even before Earth Day, one of these evangelists with a university-based ministry wrote that new consequences were emerging from the original sin as “unique men are being turned into numbers, creative beings lowered to consumers, God’s beautiful creation turned into a gas chamber of polluted air, God’s pure rivers into streams of poison.” This minister credited his awareness of such corporate sins to students he spoke with as the “youth, inheriting this world, realize deeply its deficiencies.”³⁸ Another, surveying the concerns of young ministers, reported that they saw the world standing “on the brink of a global environmental crisis” and thus Christianity’s environmental ethic must go beyond the human to offer “an extension of love to all nature.”³⁹

³⁶ Schaeffer, *Pollution and the Death of Man*, 74-76.

³⁷ Schaeffer, *Pollution and the Death of Man*, 85.

³⁸ Jan J. Capelleveen, “A Theology For Today’s Youth,” *Christianity Today* 13, no. 23 (August 22, 1969), 12.

³⁹ Carl Reidel, “Young Churchmen Eye the Seventies: Physical Science,” *Christianity Today* 24, no. 7 (January 2, 1970), 26.

Along with *Pollution and the Death of Man*, Schaeffer published a second ecologically-focused work in 1970: *The Church At The End of The 20th Century*. In it he agreed with White that modern science had arisen from a “Christian mentality” which held that both God and humans were capable of “reordering the flow of cause and effect.”⁴⁰ However, he warned of “non-objective, sociological science” which appeared more interested in manipulating society than making factual discoveries. Schaeffer was less concerned about the purely technological applications of science and referred instead to sociological manipulation when he warned: “Beware, therefore, of the movement to give the scientific community the right to rule.”⁴¹ He also warned that communism was likely to begin manipulating the masses through religion rather than atheism and that increasing ecological problems only increased the appeal of pantheism.⁴² It is important to note that Schaeffer (and other postwar premillennialists) did not associate *concern for the Creation* with anti-Christian forces, but rather encouraged environmentalism in order to avoid allowing environmental condition to reach such hopeless conditions as to make drastic, anti-Christian solutions appealing. Addressing pollution and maintaining a

⁴⁰ Francis Schaeffer, *The Church At The End of The 20th Century* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1970), 9-10.

⁴¹ Schaeffer, *The Church At The End of The 20th Century*, 92.

⁴² Schaeffer, *The Church At The End of The 20th Century*, 95.

thriving environment would make one's unbelieving neighbors less likely to adopt paganism or support policies paving the way for the Antichrist.⁴³

Schaeffer, like Rushdoony, grounded much of his thinking in Abraham Kuyper's "sphere concept"⁴⁴—though he extended this to conceive of a sphere of Creation and the obligations of creatures toward each other. The human might be created in the image of God, but as a created being one was to "deal with every other created thing with integrity." Schaeffer and Rushdoony had maintained a friendship throughout the 1960s, readings each others works and corresponding regularly. However, whereas Rushdoony located the God-ordained authority for changing the world within the sphere of the family, Schaeffer saw that power emanating from another sphere. His proposed solution to the death of nature was for the Church to serve as the "pilot plant" which would modeled such integrity and promote a "Christian-based" approach to science and technology which would "consciously try to see nature substantially healed."⁴⁵ This was

⁴³ Schaeffer's book received glowing endorsements from the flagship publication of conservative, premillennial evangelicalism, *Christianity Today*—though reviewers wondered why Schaeffer did not go further in linking "a possible relation between the current crises and apocalyptic judgement." Wilber L. Bullock, "Ecology and Apocalypse," *Christianity Today* 15, no. 15 (April 23, 1971), 24.

⁴⁴ Julie J. Ingersoll has traced a genealogy of Rushdoony's ideas which began with the 19th-century Dutch-Calvinist Kuyper who translated the ideas of St. Augustine and John Calvin into a vision of distinct spheres which governed the individual's behavior and obligations. These ideas would, along with the presuppositionalism of theologians like Herman Dooyeweerd and Cornelius Van Til, form the basis for Rushdoony's Reconstructionism. Julie J. Ingersoll, *Building God's Kingdom: Inside the World of Christian Reconstructionism* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2015), 14.

⁴⁵ Schaeffer, *Pollution and the Death of Man*, 51. Two decades later, Loren Wilkinson (a leading evangelical environmentalist and amillennialist) would call Schaeffer's proposal that churches serve as "pilot plants" for ecological healing one of the "wisest observations" made by any evangelical. Loren Wilkinson, "Eco-Myths: Myth 3: There Is Nothing Christians Can Do," *Christianity Today* 38, no. 4 (April 4, 1994), 31.

in contrast to Rushdoony's view of science as the chief tool for subduing Creation and fulfilling the Dominion Mandate. (For his part, Schaeffer saw humanity as a fallen creature unable to rightly exercise dominion.)

Schaeffer's view of the Bible was also much less rigid and presuppositional than Rushdoony's. He believed, as did many premillennialists, that the "days" of Creation referred to undefined lengths of time and never accepted the claims of young-earth creationists. However, he did not grant scientists hermeneutical authority and was not afraid to question or reinterpret their findings. Believing that in the end there should be no conflict between the Bible and science, he nonetheless remained ambivalent about whether one ought to be used to interpret the other. Thus, Schaeffer occupied something of a liminal space between Reconstructionist thinking and premillennial orthodoxy. In fact, it was Schaeffer's determined commitment to premillennialism which ultimately led the men to part ways as each recognized that the other's eschatology was incompatible with their worldview.⁴⁶

Pollution and the Death of Man received a warm welcome from conservative evangelicals and especially from evangelical scientists. It is important to remember that White did not give his lecture to historians, economists, or theologians, but rather at a meeting scientists. V. Elving Anderson, a geneticist and president of the evangelical American Scientific Affiliation, was present at the AAAS meeting where White spoke and thus the first evangelicals to learn of the new challenge to their faith were scientists.

⁴⁶ Schaeffer, *Pollution and the Death of Man*, 59, 81-82; Hankins, *Francis Schaeffer and the Shaping of Evangelical America*, 140-152, 193.

Five months later these scientists shared White's argument with evangelical leaders from *Christianity Today*, Inter-Varsity Christian Fellowship, Campus Crusade for Christ, and others at a "Consultation of Christian Scholars" conference near Washington D.C. in May of 1967. Taking the lead in the discussion, Anderson and his colleagues explained that *actual* ecosystems hardly resembled the "democracy of creatures" envisioned by St. Francis and, if anything, White's exemplar could only serve as the patron saint for the ecology of the Millennial Kingdom.⁴⁷

A more immediate concern was the implications for White's proposed solutions on pure scientific inquiry. Just a few weeks after the AAAS meeting, Anderson had published his initial response and questioned whether White was "simply transferring guilt from secular man...to a misunderstood scriptural heritage." Long concerned with scientism, Anderson and his fellow evangelical scientists now worried that White's emphasis on Eastern mysticism and an Assisian relation to the physical might add to this unbounded authority a decaying sense of objectivity and methodological rigor. They acknowledged that Christians were guilty of indifference toward the natural world, but White's "superficial" understanding of the biblical view of nature risked drawing researchers into "a sophisticated type of nature worship which could be quite detrimental

⁴⁷ David Larsen, "God's Gardeners: American Protestant Evangelicals Confront Environmentalism, 1967-2000," (Ph.D. diss., University of Chicago, 2001), 43-46.

to science.”⁴⁸ Those gathered at the conference shared his concern. However, it was White’s critique of the Dominion Mandate which appeared most confounding to them. By the end of the conference they could only default to a position of “positive shepherding care” (what would later be called “stewardship” and “Creation care”) and finding little within their tradition that went beyond this environmental ethic.⁴⁹

Stymied in their own efforts to craft a uniquely evangelical environmental ethic, the ASA (whose membership included numerous premillennialists) was ecstatic to receive Schaeffer’s book and gave *Pollution and the Death of Man* glowing reviews. In addition to discussing Schaeffer’s eco-theology at multiple meetings, the ASA was eager to explore both the scientific reality of the ecological crisis and the ethical implications inherent in addressing such problems. In the years following White’s charge, overpopulation, pollution, and Christian responsibility dominated the associations meetings. Their annual meeting in 1969 explored topics like “Hunger, Overpopulation, and Birth Control,” “The Biological Time Bomb,” and “Pollution.” Speakers, including Anderson, called for an “international Joseph” who might provide global solutions to the issue of population, though they referenced George Orwell rather than the Book of

⁴⁸ “Scientific Exploitation of Nature,” *Christianity Today* 11, no. 8 (January 20, 1967), 28; Elving’s fully developed response to White would not come until 1973 with his entry on “Environmental Pollution” in *Baker’s Dictionary of Christian Ethics*. Although an amillennialist himself, Anderson framed his ethic in terms of apocalypse and hope which sounded very familiar to premillennialists: “Acute awareness of environmental problems has given a new meaning to exhortations to ‘repent or perish.’ The difficulties are real and serious, and will not respond to weak efforts. Nevertheless, a sense of hope is needed to avoid the fatalism that can paralyze effective action.” V. Elving Anderson, “Environmental Pollution,” in *Baker’s Dictionary of Christian Ethics*, ed. Carl F. H. Henry (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House Company, 1973), 209-212.

⁴⁹ Larsen, “God’s Gardeners,” 43-46.

Revelation when they cautioned against a possible “1984 situation” and urged scientists to be conscientious of the social impacts of their research. Another reminded participants that pollution was a “patient assassin” which threatened humanity. That same year at Stanford University, ASA members conducted a symposium titled “God, Man & Our Environment” featuring topics including “The Crises of Clean Waters,” “The Citizen’s Role in Air Pollution Control,” “Chemical Ecology and Man” and a concluding panel discussion on “The Christian’s Response to His Environment.”⁵⁰

A month later, a Chicago meeting that same year explored “The Christian’s Attitude Toward Problems Associated with Increasing World Population” and advertising warned attendees: “It may take several cups of coffee to settle some of these question.” That following March the same group met public health officials and environmental engineers to consider topics like “Water Pollution Control” and “Ethical Aspects of Pollution Control.” The 1971 annual conference pressed such topics even further with the theme “Science, Scripture, and Man’s Environment” and adopting as its guiding verse Isaiah 24:4-6 which they translated: “The earth is drooping, withering...and the sky wanes with the earth, for the earth has been polluted by the dwellers on its face. Therefore a curse is crushing the earth, alighting on its guilty folk; mortals are dying off, til few are left.” The theme proved important enough that in the typically slow months of

⁵⁰ F. Alton Everest, “Chicago,” *American Scientific Affiliation Newsletter* 12, no. 2, April, 1970, 6; Everest, “1969 Convention Probes Social Issues,” *American Scientific Affiliation Newsletter* 11, no. 2, May 18, 1969, 1-2; Everest, “Convention ’69 Echoes,” *American Scientific Affiliation Newsletter* 11, no. 4, September 25, 1969, 5-6; Everest, “San Francisco Bay,” *American Scientific Affiliation Newsletter* 11, no. 5, December, 1969, 12-13.

summer the Oregon branch followed up with its own meeting under the title “The Role of the Christian in Ecological Crises” and included yet another discussion of Schaeffer’s book.⁵¹

Prophecy Popularizers Take Up Environmentalism

Historical accounts of the development of conservative evangelical environmentalism have been scarce and those that have examined the phenomenon have typically focused on *Pollution and the Death of Man* to the exclusion of other evangelical approaches to the ecological crisis in the 1970s. As Gish declared: “Apart from Schaeffer’s book no other evangelical ecotheological monograph was published throughout the 1970s.” In contrast to the broader environmental movement, “no evangelical environmental organization emerged during the 1970s, and evangelical thinking about environmental problems decreased toward the end of the decade.”⁵² While Gish is correct that evangelicals founded no organizations overtly concerned with environmentalism in the 1970s, the claim that evangelicals gave less thought to such matters as the decade progressed is only valid if one chooses to ignore the incredibly popular works by premillennial prophecy writers. Environmental interest burned so

⁵¹; Everest, “Chicago,” *American Scientific Affiliation Newsletter* 11, no. 5, December, 1969, 9-10; Everest, “Chicago,” *American Scientific Affiliation Newsletter* 12, no. 2, April, 1970, 6; Everest, “Science, Scriptures, and Man’s Environment,” *American Scientific Affiliation* 13, no. 2, April, 1971, 1-2; Everest, “Oregon,” *American Scientific Affiliation* 13, no. 5, October, 1971, 12.

⁵² Gish, *God’s Wounded World*, 38. Gish is not alone in describing evangelical environmental thinking as declining (in tandem with the broader public concern) across the decade. Fowler, Larsen, and Pogue have also described evangelical interest in environmental issues as spiking early in the 1970s and then gradually tapering off as the decade proceeded.

brightly among premillennial thinkers that their interpretations of the growing crisis became in effect a form of eco-eschatology. As their prophecy paperbacks sold in the millions, these apocalypticists kept the messages of both contemporary ecologists and the Bible fresh in the minds of lay evangelicals even as other theologians lost interest.

Billy Graham was a young premillennialist who was fast becoming the face of American evangelicalism by the time Earth Day 1970 arrived and had been using his itinerant pulpit to publicize ecological concerns years before White's thesis. Graham, who would for decades serve as a spiritual advisor to the White House, began his national career as a well-spoken and highly apocalyptic revivalist. By age twenty-nine, having already been named the president of Northwestern Bible College, Graham's entered the national spotlight in September of 1949 when he launched what was billed as a "mammoth tent crusade" in Los Angeles. Combining elements of the jeremiad with the latest nuclear concerns of premillennialism, he caught the attention of the press with his declaration that Soviet atomic bombs would soon fall on major U.S. cities unless the nation repented and enacted serious moral reform. This dispensational distillation of the Cold War ethos led the ardently anti-communist media magnate William Randolph Hearst to famously wire his editors the simple command: "Puff Graham." The resulting attention soon drew over 350,000 to Graham's revival tent and launched the young preacher, his

style of culturally-engaged evangelicalism, and his eschatology into the American consciousness.⁵³

By 1965, Graham's star was burning white-hot along with his premillennial fervor. His book, *World Aflame*, surveyed the tumult of the decade and helped to establish several modern ecological threats as staples within the prophecy genre. Graham opened his book by describing the scene at the initial atomic test at Alamogordo, calling it the start of a new era—"perhaps the last era."⁵⁴ Beginning with that fire in the desert, he went on to identify the various "flames" he saw as threatening to consume the world. Perhaps quite surprisingly given the strong views on abortion evangelicals like Graham would come to hold, the first threat he saw was the "Demographic Flame," writing that the "population explosion...baffles our finest minds." Warning that, if unchecked, the U.S. population alone would reach nine billion in only six generation, Graham had no easy solution and expressed concern that most likely prospect for population reduction—nuclear war—would likewise spell the end for civilization.⁵⁵ Another world-shaking threat came from the "Flame of Uncontrolled Science." He noted the irony that Western civilization appeared poised on the brink of destruction despite its many political, economic, and scientific achievements: "Indeed, the latter may be the cause of its death. This is the generation that produced DDT to kill bugs, 2-4-D to kill weeds, formula 1080

⁵³ Laurie Goodstein, "Billy Graham, 99, Dies; Pastor Filled Stadiums and Counseled Presidents," *New York Times* (February 21, 2018); For more on Graham's premillennial influence, see Boyer, *When Time Shall Be No More*, 139.

⁵⁴ Billy Graham, *World Aflame* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Company, 1965), xiii.

⁵⁵ Graham, *World Aflame*, 2.

to kill rats, and E=MC2 to wipe out populations.”⁵⁶ Not only had a “new faith of scientism” replaced biblical faith and become the god of this generation, but through science humanity “perfected our weapons but failed to perfect the men who use them.”⁵⁷

Despite these warnings, Graham was hardly antagonistic toward science. As premillennialists had done for centuries, he considered the scientific exploration of nature—the second text in Two Books Theology—to be a source of joy. “God reveals Himself in *nature*,” he wrote. “There is a language in nature that speaks of the existence of God.” He even envisioned heaven as the ultimate setting for scientific exploration, predicting that it will be “more modern and up to date than of the present-day constructions of mean... a place to challenge the creative genius of the unfettered mind.”⁵⁸

World Aflame quickly proved to be one of Graham’s more influential and widely-read titles. Only sixteen months after its initial publication, the title was already in its third printing with over a half-million copies sold. The *Fort Worth Star-Telegram* called it “a product of man’s highest intellect” and begged readers to consider its message. Writing on the heels of Carson and Bookchin and still years before White, Graham and other premillennialists from the mid-1960s onward would draw attention to scientific reports warning of radioactive fallout, water and air pollution, deforestation, loss of biodiversity, climate change, the risks of synthetic chemicals, and the potentially suicidal danger of an unquestioning faith in science and its technologies. Most importantly, Graham and others

⁵⁶ Graham, *World Aflame*, 10-11.

⁵⁷ Graham, *World Aflame*, 38, 224.

⁵⁸ Graham, *World Aflame*, 96-97, 259.

would continue the premillennial tradition of combining scientific predictions with biblical hope. Fatalism rarely appeared in their pages. The inevitability of the End Times and even their seeming immanence fostered no resigned passivity. Graham provided his readers with four attitudes they should adopt in light of world event. After encouraging them to prepare with urgency, wait with patience, and watch with anticipation, he conclude with a charge to work “with zeal” and continue living as Christians deeply engaged with the world.⁵⁹

Graham was far from the only premillennialist to make ecology a major theme in his best-selling prophecy books. The name “Salem Kirban” is today an obscure one even among historians of U.S. religion, but was once a familiar one to lay evangelicals in the 1960s and 1970s. A graduate of Temple University who then served in the U.S. Navy during WWII, Kirban would go on to cover operations in Vietnam as a war correspondent before turning to prophecy writing. With far less celebrity than Graham, but more frenetically activity at the grassroots level through his family-operated ministry, Kirban’s efforts resulted in millions of prophecy paperbacks sold. Like Graham, he also promoted concerns of ecological degradation to conservative evangelicals before White’s thesis had reached the mainstream. Originally published in 1968, his *Guide to Survival* was on its thirteenth printing by January of 1974 with over a half-million copies sold. The book would continue to be reprinted up to 1993.

⁵⁹ Graham, *World Aflame*, 230-231.

Kirban began *Guide to Survival* by immediately thanking leading environmentalists such as Paul Ehrlich (*The Population Bomb*) and Edward Edelson (*Poison in the Air*) for their books bringing key elements of the environmental crisis to his attention.⁶⁰ Deeply concerned with the possible annihilation of humanity, Kirban critiqued the trend of building super churches while the nations of earth stockpile nuclear weapons. Kirban condemned those large churches more interested in constructing massive buildings than in addressing the growing nuclear threat.⁶¹ He called arms reduction the “logical step,” though he admitted one unlikely to happen given the Cold War attitude of both the United States and the Soviet Union. Such an attitude was folly to him given how “when we had the A-bomb and the Russians didn’t—neither they nor we disarmed.”⁶² Along with the nuclear threat, Kirban was primarily concerned with two great ecological threats: air pollution and the population explosion.

Years before climate change became a mainstream concern, Kirban warned readers: “More and more, some of the country's top weather experts are of the belief that dirty air may be triggering the unusual weather conditions that we have been experiencing in the last few years...This has been evident by the extremes of weather which become greater and more frequent”⁶³ He continued:

⁶⁰ Salem Kirban, *Guide to Survival* (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House, 1968), 4. In a warm bit of humanity, Kirban also thanked by name every individual who served him coffee at the various diners he sat in while researching and writing his book.

⁶¹ Kirban, *Guide to Survival*, 39-40.

⁶² Kirban, *Guide to Survival*, 72, 83.

⁶³ Kirban, *Guide to Survival*, 46.

Some scientists say that a few degrees of cooling will bring on a new ice age with rapid and drastic effects on the agricultural productivity of the temperate regions. On the other hand, if we have a few degrees of heating the polar ice caps would melt and perhaps raise the ocean levels 250 feet. By polluting the earth on which we live, we tamper with the energy balance of the earth. This results in an 'environmental roulette.'...While problems of air pollution have been with us a long time, recent years have shown a great acceleration in the volume of air pollutants to the point where we are reaching the critical stage.⁶⁴

Kirban then recounted recent deadly smogs in London, New York, and the infamous case in Donora, Pennsylvania, which left twenty dead in its wake and dozens more to expire in the months that followed.⁶⁵ Kirban chided those like the postmillennialist David Meldrum who naively believed that the Earth's capacity for absorbing pollution was limitless, informing readers that the planet "is basically a closed system" and one was rapidly approaching its capacity for disaster. Such pollution was resulting not only in increased human deaths, but widespread death in the animal kingdom as well. Pesticides had "caused spectacular kills of fish and wildlife—thus upsetting the balance of nature which was created by God." Kirban highlighted the use of DDT in New Brunswick in an attempt to control spruce budworm which in turn wiped out two years' worth of young salmon. "DDT is almost certainly to blame for the alarming decrease in New England's falcons, hawks and herons. While these on the surface may not seem too important, every

⁶⁴ Kirban, *Guide to Survival*, 48.

⁶⁵ Kirban, *Guide to Survival*, 48.

step along the way is another irreversible step in upsetting the balance of nature created by God.”⁶⁶

Having covered the war in Vietnam, Kirban’s love for his country was not an uncritical one. The growing trend of poisonous air, garbage-filled streets, and polluted waterways left Kirban struggling “to sing ‘America the Beautiful’ with any real meaning.”⁶⁷ He criticized the American standard of living for extracting so much energy while taking little effort to address the resulting pollution: “The air we breathe circles the earth 40 times a year, and America contributed 140 million tons of pollutants: 90 million tons from cars—we burn more gasoline than the rest of the world combined!” Kirban then discussed the harmful effects of tetraethyl lead in automobile gasoline. He noted that even “Arctic glaciers now contain this wind-wafted lead.”⁶⁸ Even more shameful in his eyes was the fact that, “the United States, which is less than 1/12th of the population of the world, requires more than all the rest of the world to maintain its prime position.”⁶⁹

Few aspects of Western lifestyles escaped Kirban’s critiques. He even criticized the growing trend of nation’s securing their borders through walls, calling such instances “civilized cruelty” toward refugees and a sign of Western indifference which was being

⁶⁶ Kirban, *Guide to Survival*, 50-51.

⁶⁷ Kirban, *Guide to Survival*, 48-49.

⁶⁸ Kirban, *Guide to Survival*, 52.

⁶⁹ Kirban, *Guide to Survival*, 61.

exploited by communist forces.⁷⁰ Kirban's criticism of First World indifference also meant that his discussion of the Rapture (which featured prominently in his book) was never used as justification for passivity. He frequently juxtaposed the hope of an impending Rapture with sharp criticisms of a Western style of life that offered consumers dozens of options for pet food yet struggled to bring food to starving nations like Biafra.⁷¹ Not only the lifestyles of Americans, but the American government which "not only has exercised the right to lie but has on occasion purposely lied to its citizens."⁷²

Creation was becoming not only irreversibly polluted, but also increasingly crowded and with a diminishing capacity for feeding the rapidly growing human population. Kirban quoted Democratic Secretary of Agriculture Orville Freeman: "The world will literally run out of food by the mid-1980's." Kirban linked this to Matthew 24 which discusses famine as a precursor to the end times.⁷³ He pointed to developments in medical science as the "straw that broke the camel's back," noting that the prolonging of life coupled with dramatically reduced infant mortality represents a "complex factor" in

⁷⁰ Kirban, *Guide to Survival*, 67. Kirban's critical evaluation of the United States challenged many positions which today appear traditionally conservative, such as unquestioning support for the Second Amendment. In a section titled, "The Growing Gun Menace," he could only shake his head at the difficulty politicians faced for simply proposing a registration of guns in the country. A growing demand for weapons had turned the nation into "an arsenal" and resulted in more Americans killed by privately-owned firearms than all of the wars which Americans had fought in combined. Pp. 77-78. In a lengthy examination of the riot at the 1968 Democratic National Convention in Chicago, Kirban decried the "POLICE STATE" he saw quickly developing. Police brutality and the desperate attempts by politicians to control the news was producing an authoritarian state rivaling those installed by the Communists in the Eastern Bloc. Kirban, *Guide to Survival*, 91-97.

⁷¹ Kirban, *Guide to Survival*, 105, 111.

⁷² Kirban, *Guide to Survival*, 167.

⁷³ Kirban, *Guide to Survival*, 54.

the exploding population.⁷⁴ Highlighting the still nebulous views evangelicals held toward human reproduction at that time, Kirban was critical of the Catholic Church's recent condemnation of mechanical birth control, calling such opposition one of the primary reasons why the population explosion appeared to be an "insurmountable problem."⁷⁵ Importantly, though both Graham and Kirban devoted plenty of space to discussing the coming reign of the totalitarian Antichrist (and, in Kirban's *Guide to Survival*, an equally sinister "World Church"), neither hinted at the possibility that environmental regulations might someday be used by such satanic regimes to gain a foothold. Kirban criticized the United States for resisting common sense international agreements, in particular for being the only nation not to sign the 1925 Geneva Protocol outlawing the development of chemical and biological weapons.⁷⁶

Despite the Graham's national acclaim and Kirban's tireless legwork, it would be a relatively unknown Youth for Christ worker named Hal Lindsey whose first published book would quickly dwarf the sales of both *World Aflame* and *Guide to Survival*. Co-written with Carole C. Carlson (who ghostwrote—often without credit—for many of the leading premillennial authors), Lindsey's *The Late Great Planet Earth* took both the evangelical world and American counterculture by storm, selling over thirty million

⁷⁴ Kirban, *Guide to Survival*, 58.

⁷⁵ Kirban, *Guide to Survival*, 61.

⁷⁶ Kirban, *Guide to Survival*, 70-71.

copies and going on to become the best-selling non-fiction book of the 1970s.⁷⁷ Lindsey acknowledged that the book was “not a complex theological treatise,” but it was precisely the simplicity of his descriptions and the book’s general accessibility which helped to drive both its sales and its cultural influence.⁷⁸ It would also prove to be an invaluable tool for evangelism as many future evangelical leaders (including several Reconstructionists) would credit the book—which was often sold in secular book stores and marketed to spiritual seekers—with leading them to accept Christ.

For Lindsey, the ecological crisis was not an abstract threat but something which unnerved him to the point of disrupting his personal communion with God:

You know, I used to come to the beach to get away from things. Just the relaxing of the waves pounding the shore. But now even the ocean is a reminder that man may be running out of time. Scientists tell us today that we are approaching a time when the ocean may not be able to sustain life anymore. The Secretary General of the UN recently told us that man has perhaps ten years to solve the problem of survival. He pointed out the three great crises which are unique to this generation—the problem of nuclear weapons, the problem of over-population, the population explosion, the problem of pollution of our air and water. And he said

⁷⁷ The initial printing for *The Late Great Planet Earth* in May of 1970 was for only 10,000 copies. By the start of 1971, 135,000 copies had been printed and a year later over a million copies had been sold. By 1982 the *New York Times* was still reporting sales of over 20,000 copies per month and by 2006 over 30 million copies had sold including millions outside the United States as the book was translated into 22 different languages. James Ruark, *The House of Zondervan* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2006), 124-125, 137.

⁷⁸ Hal Lindsey and Carla C. Carlson, *The Late Great Planet Earth* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1970), 8; Lindsey had initially titled his book *Behold a White Horse*, but Zondervan had recently published another book titled *Behold a Pale Horse* and so Lindsey revised his title as a reference to *The Late Great State of California*—a fictional book which imagined the state utterly destroyed by an earthquake and environmental catastrophes. James E. Ruark, *The House of Zondervan* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2006), 123-124.

that if we don't solve these problems in this decade, we are approaching the time when they will be beyond our capacity to control.⁷⁹

Lindsey was not alone in having his spiritual meditations disrupted by ecological degradation. At the same time that he was avoiding the beach, Schaeffer (who had also mourned the death of the ocean from a California beach) was writing of how even at his remote L'Abri retreat among the Alps his soul felt the discordant effects of industrialization. "Everywhere you turn the mountains are being ripped up to make roads across them so that it is getting harder and harder to find a quiet place," he wrote. Venturing down from the mountains he found Lake Geneva to be "sick" with pollution. With a seriousness that prophecy writers like Lindsey would carry forward, Schaeffer warned: "We must not kid ourselves. We are in trouble."⁸⁰

Lacking the academic training of Graham and the journalistic experience of Kirban, Lindsey still did his best to cite authoritative figures. Although the scientific underpinnings of *The Late Great Planet Earth* lacked some of the depth of Graham and Kirban's works, in many cases Lindsey's unfamiliarity made him more willing to grant authority to experts in various fields. Ecologically, his primary concerns were nuclear war

⁷⁹ Lindsey and Carlson, *The Late Great Planet Earth*, inside cover. The language and imagery of ecological devastation which *The Late Great Planet Earth* invoked was so prominent that Zondervan reported that many secular booksellers, unfamiliar with the premillennial genre, regularly placed the book in their "Ecology" sections. Ruark, *The House of Zondervan*, 127.

⁸⁰ Schaeffer, *The Church At The End of The 20th Century*, 86; Schaeffer and Lindsey also shared an openness to reinterpreting Genesis. Lindsey favored a modified "gap theory" interpretation and taught readers that "chapters 1 and 2 do not explain the original creation of Planet Earth and the universe, but assume their prior existence. If we consider this view, then these two chapters describe a *reconstruction* of the earth and its galaxy by God in six literal solar days." Hal Lindsey, *Satan Is Alive And Well On Planet Earth* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1972), 52-53.

(he famously interpreted the falling stars and demonic locusts of Revelation as first-century attempts to describe ICBMs and Apache helicopters) and the population explosion.⁸¹ He made it clear that he disagreed with those who felt the “population bomb” was an exaggeration and cited U.N. population reports and the work of experts like J. Bruce Griffing (chairman, Ohio State University genetics department), Stanley F. Yolles (director, National Institute of Mental Health), and Paul Ehrlich (professor, Stanford University) to argue that overpopulation represented a threat on par with nuclear war.

Importantly, the only notes of hopelessness and fatalism to be found in *The Late Great Planet Earth's* often bombastic text were those provided by secular experts. Lindsey quoted Ehrlich as saying: "Mankind may be facing its final crisis. No action that we can take at this late date can prevent a great deal of future misery from starvation and environmental deterioration."⁸² In contrast to the threats of nuclear war and overpopulation, the book had few specifics to give readers regarding pollution and environmental deterioration. However, once the popularity of Lindsey's book became evident, it was greenlit for a film adaptation featuring Orson Welles alongside Lindsey. It

⁸¹ Lindsey's "time travel" hermeneutic for interpreting prophecy was by no means unique to him. Two decades earlier, one interpreter pointing to the power of TNT explained how God "gave flashes of scientific truth far beyond the intelligence of the writer who put them on record." Andrew Johnson, "The Bible and Science," *Church of God Evangel* 41, no. 50 (February 24, 1951), 4; When Richard H. Bube of the evangelical American Scientific Affiliation reviewed Lindsey's book, he expressed surprise that environmental concerns did not featured more heavily in Lindsey's interpretation given the obvious similarities between the predictions of ecologists and those of John the Revelator. Richard H. Bube, "Review of *The Late Great Planet Earth*," *Journal of the American Scientific Affiliation* 24, no. 1 (March, 1972), 33-34.

⁸² Lindsey and Carlson, *The Late Great Planet Earth*, 101-102.

was there, on the big screen, that Lindsey was able to bring the biblical gravity of the environmental crisis to the fore.

Over scenes of fires, floods, and famines, Lindsey, Welles, and a panel of scientists presented viewers with the full spectrum of ecological threats. Welles began by reminding the audience of how "in spite of the dazzling achievements of 20th century technology, we are constantly reminded of how helpless and puny man is before the forces of nature." He then connected increasingly erratic and intense storms to a changing global climate. Paul Ehrlich, performing a simple calculation on a piece of paper, informed viewers that roughly a thousand people would have starved to death by the time they left the theater. He predicted a "huge die-off" would take place at some point before the world population reached 8 billion. Nobel Prize-winner George Wald warned of the deterioration of the life-protecting ozone layer and how synthetic chemicals, working their way up through the food chain, now threatened human health. This potentially final generation was also the first "to have DDT in its liver, lead in its blood, mercury in its brain, asbestos in its lungs, and radioactive elements in its bones."⁸³

Even the intentional alterations of living organisms by humans were backfiring. The Africanized killer bee of South America was a "dramatic example of the ecological backlash that has come from man's arrogant disregard for nature." In an early commentary on what would become the transhumanism debate, the film warned of the "identity crisis" which could result from the excessive implanting of synthetic and

⁸³ *The Late Great Planet Earth*, directed by Rolf Forsberg and Robert Amran (Medford, OR: Pacific International Enterprises, 1978).

transplanted organs. After introducing the audience to the words of Isaiah 24:5 which warns that the Earth is “defiled” humans transgress the laws established by God, Lindsey and Welles offered the following interpretation:

When Isaiah made this prophecy, pollution was unheard of. But now we know exactly what he was talking about. There's another prophecy in Daniel which says that in the end days knowledge would increase but this will not save man from destruction. As we take stock of our situation on planet earth there can be little question that our technology has advanced beyond our moral judgement of how to use it. For centuries man has been raping the earth without thought but the consequences now we are told that our natural resources will be exhausted by the year 2000...Isaiah said that man would be punished for polluting the earth and everywhere we look on our beleaguered planet there's evidence that his prophecy is coming true. Our waters are now so polluted that they threaten the very air we breathe.⁸⁴

Whereas attempts decades later to dissuade evangelicals from environmental concern would rely precisely on a skepticism of scientific expertise, Lindsey's film inverted this formula. After presenting the ecological concerns of over a dozen scientists, it cuts to a series of man-on-the-street interviews to show the contrasting apathy of the average person in regard to the serious threats. Historian George Marsden was right in identifying an intellectual heritage of Scottish Common Sense within American evangelicalism, but this must be distinguished from cruder images of populist anti-intellectualism.⁸⁵ The evangelical impulse to trust in their own ability to comprehend

⁸⁴ *The Late Great Planet Earth*, directed by Rolf Forsberg and Robert Amran (Medford, OR: Pacific International Enterprises, 1978).

⁸⁵ Marsden, *Fundamentalism and American Culture*, 7, 14-15.

reality did not predispose them toward a skepticism of expertise (though they often questioned authority) nor toward the collective opinions of the untrained masses. A few decades earlier, an evangelical writer for the American Tract Society had, like Lindsey's film, pointed to the public's doubt toward groundbreaking scientists like Samuel Morse, Edward Jenner, and Madame Curie. These jeering mobs had initially mocked such inventions as the telegraph, the vaccine, and the medicinal applications of radium, but in each case the writer declared, "the crowd was mistaken!"⁸⁶ Now, as that same public dismissed the warnings of environmental scientists, Welles' narrating voice asked viewers: "Is it pride or conceit or ignorance that makes us feel invincible before nature?"⁸⁷

Early Backlash Against Premillennial Environmentalism

While the public may have been carefree in their ignorance of biblical prophecies and environmental predictions, journalists and liberal theologians found such a synthesis infuriating. In the eyes of one cultural critic, the film was nothing more than the "typical hippie dreck about the ozone layer being brown." Offering a glimpse into the broader culture's fatigue of dire pronouncements by the end of the 1970s, this secular reviewer openly declared: "Screw ecologists. I stand with Carl Sandburg—a factory is as beautiful

⁸⁶ Nathanael Olson, "The Crowd May Be Wrong," *Baptist Bible Tribune* 2, no. 29 (February 22, 1952), 3.

⁸⁷ *The Late Great Planet Earth*, directed by Rolf Forsberg and Robert Amran (Medford, OR: Pacific International Enterprises, 1978).

as a tree.”⁸⁸ Others found the film’s privileging of scientific expertise over the public’s opinion to be offensive. Reviewer Gary Wilburn—himself a rare outspoken advocate of postmillennialism (though not a Reconstructionist)—expressed his opposition to the depiction that “only the pessimistic are really informed.” He directly challenged the film’s premillennial concerns with the environmental crisis, writing that “such proof-texting of current events is propaganda.”⁸⁹ Another liberal theologian would go even further—offering a book-length attack on the emerging premillennialist-ecologist alliance and providing the first complete draft of what would become known as the End Times Apathy Hypothesis.

Whereas Veldman and other historians of Christian environmentalism have identified the early 1980s and controversies surrounding Ronald Reagan and James Watt as the earliest instances of the End Times Apathy Hypothesis, a book from 1972 had already mapped out many of the same beats a decade earlier. Richard S. Hanson, an amillennial professor of religion at Luther College, wrote his book—*The Future of the Great Planet Earth*—as a direct counter to Lindsey’s. With frequent references to the cultural influence and financial success of *The Late Great Planet Earth*, Hanson’s tone throughout his book was one of unconcealed indignation. Amidst a stream of ad hominem attacks, he reminded the reader that *he* was educated (with a Ph.D from Harvard University) while his theological opponents and their readers were ignorant. He refused

⁸⁸ Mark Jacobson, “The Late Great Orson Welles,” *The Village Voice* 24, no. 5 (January 29, 1979), 42.

⁸⁹ Gary Wilburn, “The Doomsday Chic,” *Christianity Today* 21, no. 8 (January 27, 1978), 22.

to believe that premillennialists could genuinely care about a planet they believed would soon undergo the tribulations of Revelation and singled out the books written by Lindsey and Kirban to frenetically argue that:

...deep down, they hate this planet God made as our home. They hate it so much they want to see it destroyed—by God and the armies of wickedness all put together. They don't like it here and that's why they hope for a kind of salvation that takes them away from this place...There are many who don't like this earth of the Lord's. You can tell by the way they act. They strip it and rape it to build their own kinds of worlds...But there are religious people who seem to despise this creation as much as the worst polluters. They talk about "the end" as though it will be the end of God's earth. They talk about salvation as an escape from this planet—a journey into the skies on some kind of magic spirit-ship. They think and talk like misplaced people. They cannot believe that they belong here. They think they belong in heaven and heaven, to them, is a somewhere-else place."⁹⁰

Despite his aggressive stance, Hanson misunderstood certain key premillennial views. He criticized them for thinking of eternity “up in the sky” rather than on a renewed Earth, yet premillennialists from the seventeenth century onward had preached specifically against this error. Likewise, his insistence that premillennialism could only breed passivity at best and was more likely to provoke suicidal fatalism was a view completely at odds with the long history of such beliefs. Premillennialists like Carl Reidel—who served as a director at the Center for Environmental Studies at Williams College—consistently translated their conviction that the end was near into a sense of urgency that the time to act was now. When asked if believers needed to “behave as if man is

⁹⁰ Richard S. Hanson, *The Future of the Great Planet Earth: What Does Biblical Prophecy Mean For You?* (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Press, 1972), 13-14.

going to be here forever” in order to address the ecological crisis he explained: “For the Christian I would suggest the opposite. Living as the Bible teaches, that the Lord’s return is imminent, might lead to the immediate reassessment of the meaning of Christian stewardship that I am advocating.”⁹¹

At several points, in trying to counter the dispensationalists, Hanson made his own arguments for an eschatological form of ecology—one grounded in the confidence that the Creation and its environment are safely under God’s control regardless of predicted disasters. His response to both premillennialists and environmentalists was that, “Despite all warnings of judgement and censure of our human ways, despite all dire predictions, the overwhelming message of the Bible is good news for all creation.”⁹² However, in downplaying disaster and emphasizing the wholly benevolent idea that “the whole world is in God's hands,” Hanson in effect downplayed the data-driven ecological predictions being made by scientists. Despite the educational credentials he was so proud of, at no point did Hanson cite scientific figures or give room for discussing particular ecological concerns.

Institutional Support for Environmentalism: A Flourish and a Slow Fade

As many were growing resentful of ecologists’ critiques of their industrialized lifestyles, premillennial prophecy writers remained steadfast allies of ecologists and their

⁹¹ Carl H. Reidel, “Christianity and the Environmental Crisis,” *Christianity Today* 15, no. 15 (April 23, 1971), 8.

⁹² Hanson, *The Future of the Great Planet Earth*, 123.

paperbacks a valuable avenue for disseminating the scientists' warnings to a broad, grassroots audience. Interestingly, despite his willingness to work with evangelicals, Ehrlich was at least somewhat sympathetic to White's argument. In 1971 he wrote that the ecological crises were "an unfortunate outgrowth of a Judeo-Christian heritage, which has produced a blind science and technology and a berserk econo-centric culture."⁹³ However, Ehrlich remained optimistic about collaborations with religious groups, even the Pro-Life hierarchy of the Catholic Church. He noted the "unfortunate" influence that the Catholic hierarchy appeared to have over certain governments which in turn encouraged collaborations with Communists in blocking U.N. birth control measures. Still, he wrote, "the tide in this battle seems to be turning, and we can hope that humanitarian forces within the church will soon present mankind with a major victory."⁹⁴ Partnering with premillennial evangelicals produced far less anxiety for Ehrlich and company. In their appendix outlining action steps readers could take, Ehrlich and Harriman encouraged to readers to be active in their local church groups.⁹⁵ Ehrlich, ever concerned about population growth, may have been more eager to collaborate with premillennialists in the 1970s and 1980s given that they had not yet taken a firm position on the abortion debate.

⁹³ Paul Ehrlich and Richard L. Harriman, *How To Be A Survivor: A Plan To Save Spaceship Earth* (New York, NY: Ballantine Books, 1971), 129.

⁹⁴ Ehrlich and Harriman, *How To Be A Survivor*, 47.

⁹⁵ Ehrlich and Harriman, *How To Be A Survivor*, 152.

By the time Earth Day 1970 arrived, Graham, Kirban, and Lindsey were not alone as conservative evangelicals thinking seriously about the environment. Virtually every branch of evangelicalism, even its most fundamentalistic, participated in Earth Day, condemned pollution, and supported federal legislation to protect the natural world. Over a thousand evangelicals leaders from thirty denominations gathered at the National Association of Evangelicals' 28th annual convention and issued a "Resolution on Ecology" in which they declared: "Today those who thoughtlessly destroy a God-ordained balance of nature are guilty of sin against God's creation." In their interruption of the Dominion Mandate, "subduing" the Earth meant recognizing that future generations have "as much right to enjoy this world, and make it fruitful, as we."⁹⁶ The following year the NAE repeated this concern with a "Resolution on Environmental and Ecology" which now included runaway population growth along with pollution as major threats to human wellbeing. Further interpreting the Dominion Mandate, the world's largest evangelical organization stated that the mandate "implied a trust which we believe is violated by any wastage or spoilage of the environment detrimental to the welfare of mankind in the present age." They called upon evangelicals across the nation to support expert-endorsed efforts "even at the cost of personal discomfort or inconvenience."⁹⁷

Beyond the NAE, other evangelical organizations issued their own ecological declarations. In Tennessee, at the 53rd General Assembly of the Church of God, the

⁹⁶ National Association of Evangelicals, "Resolution on Ecology," January 1, 1970, <https://www.nae.org/ecology/>.

⁹⁷ National Association of Evangelicals, "Resolution on Environment and Ecology," January 1, 1971, <https://www.nae.org/environment-and-ecology/>.

General Overseer delivered the “message of the hour” and declared to the gathered ministers that “man has polluted his environment in a way no beast would or could do. He has wasted the thin skin of life-sustaining earth and air and water, so the end is near.”⁹⁸ A 1971 survey of Protestant pastors by the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board found that 81.7% believed that their churches should lead members in addressing issues of pollution.⁹⁹ The Southern Baptist Convention, in 1972, produced a film examining the issue of pollution titled *Home*. Its script featured a fictionalized version of Chief Seattle of the Duwamish tribe whose words on the interconnectedness of the planet would go on to become a manifesto for environmentalists—most of whom today are completely unaware of the speech's true origin.¹⁰⁰

The editorial staff of *Christianity Today* did their best to promote these ecological messages to readers in the early 1970s. They warned repeatedly that properly addressing the environmental would demand “many billions of dollars” and the sacrifice of “more than a few conveniences,” while also cautioning that “partisan politics should be kept out of it.”¹⁰¹ They repeated this call a few months later, writing that the Church should “shun

⁹⁸ Charles W. Conn, “Forward In The Face of Crisis,” The Church of God, ed., *Minutes of the 62nd General Assembly of the Church of God* (Cleveland, TN: Church of God Publishing House, 1970), 22.

⁹⁹ Southern Baptist Sunday School Board, “Pollution Survey,” *Research Roundup* 5, no. 6 (March 31, 1971), 1.

¹⁰⁰ Ted Perry, *Home*, Southern Baptist Radio and Television Commission, 1972. This dramatization of Chief Seattle would begin to circulate among environmentalists when it was reprinted in Rudolf Kaiser, “Chief Seattle’s Speech(es): American Origins and European Reception,” in *Recovering the Word: Essays on Native American Literature*, ed. Brian Swann and Arnold Krupat (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987), 525-30.

¹⁰¹ Carl F. H. Henry, “Fulfilling God’s Cultural Mandate,” *Christianity Today* 24, no. 11 (February 27, 1970), 25.

political-economic involvement in ecology” and instead focus its efforts on crafting an applicable environmental ethic.¹⁰² The most concerted of *Christianity Today’s* appeals would come soon after in a 1971 issue devoted to “Terracide.” In addressing doubts that readers might have, the editorial staff assured them that while many social issues of the day were “medium-size problems blown up by opportunists. Concern for our environment is not just one of these inflated issues.” For those who might cling to patriotism as an excuse, they condemned the “unwritten national goal” of pursuing ever-higher standards of living as the cost of exploiting nature and the poor. They even attempted to cut off potential appeals to Christ’s near return as an excuse for apathy. Although God might ultimately use the ecological crisis as part of his “ultimate judgement” of the world they wrote, “he would hardly ask us to help by being indifferent...our mandate is to preserve life.”¹⁰³

Reader reactions to the “Terracide” issue were mixed. One skeptical reader questioned the scientific basis of such a crises while another went further than even the editors in calling for limiting birth rates, writing: “If we don’t quit multiplying and start controlling, we will soon be subdued.” Another fell somewhere in between, writing that believers—especially Christian “stockholders and board chairmen”—should take the lead

¹⁰² Carl F. H. Henry, “De-Polluting Ecology Theology,” *Christianity Today* 14, no. 16 (May 8, 1970), 26; This should not imply that conservative evangelicals *only* wanted to restrict their engagement to the realm of the philosophical. One of Bebbington’s four defining features of evangelicalism is “activism.” As Leon Morris, the Australian New Testament scholar who often wrote to American believers, stated: “...we do not need profound theology to know that up till now men have not acted rightly simply on the basis of [ecological] knowledge.” Leon Morris, “One Culture,” *Christianity Today* 15, no. 16 (May 21, 1971), 56.

¹⁰³ Carl F. H. Henry, “Terracide,” *Christianity Today* 15, no. 15 (April 23, 1971), 26.

in funding environmental efforts before demanding that unbelievers pay for healing the Creation.¹⁰⁴ The magazine would continue to push for tangible, legislative action and even praise the EPA for providing a “necessary jolt” to the American people with proposals for gasoline rationing intended to reduce automobile use.¹⁰⁵

These streams of ecological concern across conservative evangelicalism came together in 1973 in the massively collaborative *Baker's Dictionary of Christian Ethics*. Edited by Carl F. Henry and featuring entries by dozens of conservative (and predominantly premillennial) evangelicals, it gave heavy attention to environmental issues. In fact, its authors criticized similar works on ethics by their liberal and ecumenical counterparts for *not* taking ecology seriously. Henry wrote that it was “in line with the ad hoc nature of liberal social concern” for such works to lack “any treatment of ‘Ecology’ or ‘Environmental Pollution.’”¹⁰⁶

For their part, these evangelicals approached the problem from multiple angles. They highlighted the educational trend toward the acquisition of knowledge and skill without accompanying ethical consideration has inevitably produced an educated society that increasingly “squanders resources” and pollutes its environment.¹⁰⁷ The pollution which followed from the Industrial Revolution served as proof of humanity’s perversion

¹⁰⁴ “Eutychus and His Kin,” *Christianity Today* 15, no. 18 (June 4, 1971), 12-14.

¹⁰⁵ Carl F. H. Henry, “A Necessary Jolt,” *Christianity Today* 17, no. 9 (February 2, 1973), 26.

¹⁰⁶ Carl F. Henry, “Ecumenicism and Ethics,” Carl F. Henry, ed., *Baker's Dictionary of Christian Ethics* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1973), 198.

¹⁰⁷ W. Ivan Hoy, “Education and Morality,” Carl F. Henry, ed., *Baker's Dictionary of Christian Ethics* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1973), 209, 211.

of the Dominion Mandate. Smog was evidence of a “sinful attitude” toward the Creation. Defoliation was a distortion of humanity’s early command to “dress and keep” the Garden. Pollution by individuals was a vice on par with alcoholism and gambling.¹⁰⁸ In Anderson’s lengthy entry on “Environmental Pollution” he identified population growth, affluence, and technology as the key causes of the ecological crisis and called for an understanding of “stewardship” that added environmental concerns to the traditional evangelical emphasis on talents and finances. So grim were the “repent or perish” predictions by secular environmentalists that Anderson concluded with what he believed to be the evangelicals’ greatest contribution to such activism: that sense of hope necessary “to avoid the fatalism that can paralyze effective action.”¹⁰⁹

However, such concerns would quickly fade from the realm of official statements and thus give historians the impression that evangelicals, like the general public, had moved on. By 1973, denominational declarations on the ecological crises slowed to a trickle. *Christianity Today*, which was more oriented toward premillennialism, carried the torch a bit further, continuing to promote such issues until 1976 before also appearing to lose interest.¹¹⁰ In editor Harold Lindsell’s final article ever to discuss environmentalism,

¹⁰⁸ W. Stanford Reid, “Industrial Revolution,” Carl F. Henry, ed., *Baker’s Dictionary of Christian Ethics* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1973), 326; Paul D. Simmons, “Smog,” Carl F. Henry, ed., *Baker’s Dictionary of Christian Ethics* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1973), 628; Kenton B. Brubaker, “Defoliation,” Carl F. Henry, ed., *Baker’s Dictionary of Christian Ethics* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1973), 170; Delbert R. Rose, “Vice,” Carl F. Henry, ed., *Baker’s Dictionary of Christian Ethics* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1973), 695.

¹⁰⁹ V. Elving Anderson, “Environmental Pollution,” Carl F. Henry, ed., *Baker’s Dictionary of Christian Ethics* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1973), 198.

¹¹⁰ Larsen, “God’s Gardeners,” 109-110.

he pressed for action via “force of legislative fiat.” Given the lack of voluntary efforts to address pollution, he reasoned that there was no better way for evangelicals to fulfill God’s commands than to “press for social legislation that would benefit our neighbors.”¹¹¹ And with that, such concerns largely faded from mainstream evangelicalism. However, in contrast to these more institutional sources, ecological concerns in the realm of prophecy writing would only continue to intensify throughout the decade and well into the 1980s.

Prophecy Popularizers: Environmentalists’ Faithful Friends in the 1970s

When historian Robert Fowler surveyed the eco-theological output of Protestant publishers during the 1970s, he reported that liberal publishers like William Eerdmans had published many works on environmentalism (at least during the early part of the decade) while similar works could hardly be found among the catalogues of conservative publishers like Zondervan.¹¹² However, Fowler’s review of evangelical titles suffered from a significant lacuna. He had overlooked those premillennial prophecy paperbacks, often published by smaller houses, which sold in the hundreds of thousands and which prominently featured the latest warnings from leading environmental scientists. Despite their popularity and Fowler’s own recognition that environmental degradation was very “compatible” with premillennialism, his conclusion that such concerns were “rarely

¹¹¹ Harold Lindsell, “The Lord’s Day and Natural Resources,” *Christianity Today* 20, no. 16 (May 7, 1976), 12.

¹¹² Robert Booth Fowler, *The Greening of Protestant Thought* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1995), 17.

mentioned” has deterred many historians from uncovering the deep well of ecological concern within conservative evangelical eschatology.¹¹³

In 1971, grassroots interest in the prophetic meaning of post-WWII developments (including the environmental crisis) spurred the spontaneous organization of the Jerusalem Conference on Prophecy. Taking a distinctly dispensational position, the international conference billed itself as one which would consider “civilization-erasing nuclear war, life-choking environmental pollution, over-population, and famine” in the light of prophecy.¹¹⁴ Held that June, the conference attracted widespread attention as Israel’s first Prime Minister David Ben-Gurion and Jerusalem mayor Teddy Kollek were on hand to welcome the premillennialists. Although the journalists in attendance focused their reports on the geopolitical ramifications of Zionism, land disputes, and biblical prophecy, the theme of ecological degradation was ever-present and the conference served as a microcosm of the environmental concerns that would occupy prophecy writers across the 1970s.¹¹⁵ Ecology and eschatology were complimentary concerns the minds of premillennialists, as one speaker explained:

At the present time the great concern is *ecology*. Men fear that unless we clean up the air, the waters, and the land, mankind will destroy itself simply by nothing. May I suggest that the only real solution will be found in the biblical doctrine of

¹¹³ Fowler, *The Greening of Protestant Thought*, 50.

¹¹⁴ Carl F. H. Henry, “The Lamp of Prophecy,” *Christianity Today* 15, no. 14 (April 9, 1971), 34.

¹¹⁵ “Evangelists Meet In The Holy Land,” *New York Times* (June 20, 1971).

eschatology—the doctrine of last things and of ultimate issues. Life itself demands an eschatology. Without it life becomes futile.¹¹⁶

Speakers at the Jerusalem conference touched on nearly every major environmental issue of the day. Grounding their interpretations in both the Bible and the latest predictions by experts, they declared that the modern prophets of doom were to be found “not in evangelical pulpits but rather in laboratories.”¹¹⁷ They cited dire statistics from authorities like the World Health Organization, the World Bank, and Noble Prize winners. Harold J. Okenga, one of the most influential evangelicals of the twentieth century, linked the population explosion and impending famine to the Black Horse of Revelation 6. At some point between 1975 and 1985, he predicted, the world would face “the greatest and most universal famine in human history.”¹¹⁸ Theologian James M. Houston warned his fellow believers that they must face the future in “new and radical ways” if they hoped to address “the threats of atomic holocaust, the population explosion, world hunger, the pollution of our planet” and avoid being “readily terminated” within the next half-century.¹¹⁹ Much like Lynn White, Houston believed that the solution must

¹¹⁶ Arnold T. Olson, “The Second Coming of Christ,” in Carl F. H. Henry, ed., *Prophecy In The Making: Messages Prepared For Jerusalem Conference On Biblical Prophecy* (Carol Stream, IL: Creation House, 1971), 124-125.

¹¹⁷ Olson, “The Second Coming of Christ,” 125.

¹¹⁸ Harold J. Okenga, “Fulfilled and Unfulfilled Prophecy,” in Carl F. H. Henry, ed., *Prophecy In The Making: Messages Prepared For Jerusalem Conference On Biblical Prophecy* (Carol Stream, IL: Creation House, 1971), 297.

¹¹⁹ James M. Houston, “The Judgement of the Nations,” in Carl F. H. Henry, ed., *Prophecy In The Making: Messages Prepared For Jerusalem Conference On Biblical Prophecy* (Carol Stream, IL: Creation House, 1971), 374-375.

come through spiritual transformation rather than technology. He compared the “autonomy of technolatrty” to Revelation 13’s Beast (itself an invention of the Antichrist), saying that both appear as omniscient and omnipotent forces in history. Whether a Beast with seven heads and ten horns or a technological network spanning the globe, the end result would be the same: “...a future dominated by technology will be an inhuman future.”¹²⁰

One means of addressing the growing crisis preached at the conference was acknowledging the role of the United States and resisting narratives of U.S. exceptionalism. One particularly insightful speaker faulted Americans for the common belief that “whatever I am, God must be,” before reminding those gathered that “God did not found the American system...He does not wear the American flag around His shoulders.”¹²¹ They critiqued the growing military-industrial complex and U.S. commitment to spending more on weapons than public education.¹²² One called for economists who were brave enough to “work out alternatives to a society motivated by

¹²⁰ Houston, “The Judgement of the Nations,” 368-369, 376.

¹²¹ Tom Skinner, “Modern Youth In Biblical Perspective,” in Carl F. H. Henry, ed., *Prophecy In The Making: Messages Prepared For Jerusalem Conference On Biblical Prophecy* (Carol Stream, IL: Creation House, 1971), 270-271; Skinner, a Black premillennialist, minced few words in getting to his point, saying: “...if the nation I come from is capitalist, therefore since I am a Christian, living in the capitalist system, I think therefore God’s a capitalist. Or if I’m a Republican in the United States and I’m a Christian, therefore Jesus is chairman of the Republican Party. In other words, we get the impression that, whatever I am, God must be.” He sought to remind his fellow “thick-headed Americans” that God was neither an American nor a capitalist and that ultimately the Lord would “pronounce judgement on all the systems of men.”

¹²² Wilbur M. Smith, “Signs of the Second Advent of Christ,” in Carl F. H. Henry, ed., *Prophecy In The Making: Messages Prepared For Jerusalem Conference On Biblical Prophecy* (Carol Stream, IL: Creation House, 1971), 194-195, 205.

economic growth if we are to avert the catastrophe of global pollution.”¹²³ In the face of intensifying technology and degrading ecology, one of the conference’s final speakers summarized the hopeful activism which premillennialism ought to inspire, telling those gathered: “We have no excuse for complacency...nor have we any cause for panic.”¹²⁴

Despite often viewing themselves as cultural outsiders, premillennialists back in the United States saw their linking of environmentalism to prophecy as one of the most mainstream and culture-conforming elements of their faith. Premillennialists’s warnings of impending calamity may have sounded out of place during the heyday of industrialization, but now amidst the post-WWII ecological crisis many like Lindsey saw that even the “prophets” of science and politics “are telling us the same thing.”¹²⁵ For these writers, it was not a matter of faith but of reason as to whether one believed time was running out. As one writer put it: “Even if the Scriptures had not foretold the end of the present world, any intelligent person could see only by looking around that the end is near.”¹²⁶

¹²³ Houston, “The Judgement of the Nations,” 375.

¹²⁴ Houston, “The Judgement of the Nations,” 361; Standing in Jerusalem, Houston preached that it was the apocalyptic passages of the Bible which served as its key antidotes against nationalism—for all nations would eventually be judged and cast down. He went so far as to contend that it was “the complacency not to believe in the apocalyptic, not just in Germany but in the whole of our Western society, [which] led to the horrible genocide of Jews.”

¹²⁵ Hal Lindsey, *There’s A New World Coming: “A Prophetic Odyssey”* (Santa Ana, CA: Vision House Publishers, 1973), 105.

¹²⁶ Wassell Burgess, *Israel, the Church, and the Coming Armageddon* (Little Rock, AR: Baptist Trumpet, 1975), 50-51. Sixty years earlier, C. I. Scofield had similarly observed how “that the human race is in a supreme crisis is obvious to the dullest intelligence.” C. I. Scofield, *What Do The Prophets Say?* (Philadelphia, PA: The Sunday School Times Company, 1916), 5.

Even those evangelicals who were engaged more so with science than prophecy agreed that time appeared to be short. Walter R. Thorson, an evangelical faculty member for ten years at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, wrote that there was “much real evidence” to support the idea of Christ’s near return given that “our situation is without precedent in history.”¹²⁷ The prophecy writer who warned that if Christ “does not return to the world before long, there will be no world to return to,” was hardly making a radical claim in light of the hopeless future envisioned by many secular environmentalists.¹²⁸ These evangelicals saw the fatalistic pronouncement by scientists that “there is no *human* answer” as an opportunity to combine a reasoned trust in science with the prophetic hope of the Bible. It was in this context that they attempted to counter that fatalism which could produce paralysis with an activist hope and thus sought to engage prophetically with environmental issues which included the pollution of water and air, a changing climate, the destruction of the biosphere, the population explosion, dehumanizing technologies, and the destructive effects of excessive capitalism both at home and abroad.

Conservative evangelicals had expressed deep concerns about the nation’s waterways since the 1960s and premillennial prophecy continued to monitor reports of poisoned waters throughout the 1970s. Kirban criticized both “private industry and government alike” for having historically treated the Ohio River as a “huge waste

¹²⁷ Walter R. Thorson, “The Spiritual Dimensions of Science,” Carl. F. H. Henry, ed., *Horizons of Science: Christian Scholars Speak Out* (San Francisco, CA: Harper & Row, 1978), 220.

¹²⁸ Ian Macpherson, *God’s Plan For This Planet: A Look at Future Events and How to Get Ready for Them* (Springfield, MO: Gospel Publishing House, 1977), 28.

disposal system” rather than a beautiful resource to be conserved and even the most fundamentalist groups cheered when industrial polluters were harshly fined for their calloused dumping.¹²⁹ Beyond the United States, these writers saw Rhine River becoming a “deathtrap for millions of fish” due to insecticide runoff. Such careless insecticide use was “building a wall of poison that may kill millions” and making its way into the planet’s oceans where the fish were now “so filled with chemical wastes that they are unfit to eat.”¹³⁰ Of particular interest to prophecy writers were reports of companies and nations sinking poisonous elements deep in the ocean. Several of them pointed to a gold mining company that sank 7,000 tons of arsenic enclosed in concrete in the Baltic Sea in the 1930s as well as the U.S. military dumping containers of poison gas into the Atlantic in 1970. The eventual release of such potent toxins, they speculated, could easily fulfill Revelation’s 3rd Trumpet (a third of the Earth’s waters poisoned) and 2nd Vial (the death of all ocean life) judgements.¹³¹ Even Schaeffer, in the midst of grappling with the larger philosophical issues of Christianity and western civilization, continued to lament the state of water pollution. The Delaware River near his childhood home in Philadelphia was now “contaminated” and its fish dead. Nearer to his L’Abri home, a local stream was now so

¹²⁹ Salem Kirban, *Your Last Goodbye* (Huntingdon Valley, PA: Salem Kirban, Inc., 1969), 110; “Polluter Fined,” *Baptist Bible Tribune* 21, no. 44 (May 14, 1971), 6.

¹³⁰ Leslie H. Woodson, *Population, Pollution, and Prophecy* (Old Tappan, NJ: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1973), 21.

¹³¹ Salem Kirban, *I Predict* (Huntingdon Valley, PA: Salem Kirban, Inc., 1970), 25; Leon Bates, *Projection For Survival* (Sherman, TX: Bible Believers Evangelistic Association, 1977), 153.

“defiled” that he confessed that he now tried “to find ways around it so I do not have to be reminded that this creation was once beautiful.”¹³²

No prophecy writer took air pollution more seriously than Salem Kirban, regularly expressing his thanks for those like Edwards Edelson and Fred Warshofsky whose works “made me aware of the growing danger air pollution is bringing to our country.” Kirban saw a predecessor for modern air pollution in the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, noting that whether called brimstone or sulphur it referred to “death from the skies” and it was still plaguing cities today in the forms of smog and poison.¹³³ Looking to the future he predicted “oxygen inhalation stations” becoming commonplace in cities as residents struggled to breathe. Such air pollution threatened even the safety of the home as aerosolized detergent enzymes induced respiratory problems and endangered the health of housewives.¹³⁴ Fellow prophecy writers like Leslie H. Woodson agreed, envisioning domed cities with purified air systems and “special suits” for those who would dare venture beyond their protective walls.¹³⁵ Turning to fiction, Kirban penned a speculative novel titled *666* which imagined a not-so-distant world where young people might visit a “Living Tree” exhibit at a museum and learn from giant murals of forests what the natural world looked like before a “pollution disaster” made vegetative life

¹³² Francis Schaeffer, *No Little People: Sixteen Sermons for the Twentieth Century* (Downers Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity Press, 1974), 222-223.

¹³³ Kirban, *Your Last Goodbye*, 47-49.

¹³⁴ Kirban, *I Predict*, 55, 65.

¹³⁵ Woodson, *Population, Pollution, and Prophecy*, 20.

virtually impossible. In an attempt to curb air pollution, that future world government abolished private automobiles—a legislative move Kirban depicts as sensible in the face of overwhelming pollution.¹³⁶

Readers of prophecy paperbacks in the 1970s learned that air pollution not only threatened their personal health, but that of the planet as well. Prophecy popularizers drew on reports of how changes in air quality threatened to unleash terrible new weather patterns. Lindsey connected Christ's prophesy that strange phenomena would occur in the Earth's atmosphere to reports of unprecedented rainfall in the eastern United States, tornado outbreaks, the flooding Mississippi River, and blizzards in the southern states. Citing the National Weather Service's reports of an increasingly "capricious" jet stream, he surmised that pollution was effecting even the upper reaches of the atmosphere and driving climatic shifts in preparation for the Tribulation.¹³⁷ Leon Bates saw the 1977 Miami snowfall as proof of a changing climate and the approaching Tribulation.¹³⁸ Looking beyond the United States, Wassell Burgess, the president of Central Bible College, saw early frosts in Russia and sustained droughts in China as a sign of changing weather patterns and prophetic fulfillment.¹³⁹

¹³⁶ Kirban, *666* (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House, 1970), 49-50, 56-57.

¹³⁷ Lindsey, *There's A New World Coming*, 117-119.

¹³⁸ Leon Bates, *Projection For Survival* (Sherman, TX: Bible Believers Evangelistic Association, 1977), 155.

¹³⁹ Burgess, *Israel, the Church, and the Coming Armageddon*, 50.

Beyond even changing weather, prophecy popularizers were quick to identify the larger trend in scientific reporting that the planet's climate itself was changing. While a few like Arthur Bloomfield had written on climate change from the premillennial perspective as early as the mid-1950s, the 1970s saw the topic become a major concern of the genre. As early as 1970, Kirban cited University of California professor E. F. Watt's testimony before Congress on how unchecked population growth and its subsequent pollution of the atmosphere could produce another ice age.¹⁴⁰ At the same time, Kirban recognized the potential for pollution to lead to a warming climate given that carbon dioxide "acts as a heat trap" and sufficient pollution could lead to sea levels rising by four feet or more.¹⁴¹ Other writers took seriously the warnings of a possible Snowball Earth, with one writing that continued pollution would leave the planet "as a lifeless orb, covered with a leprosy of snow, rolling uninhabited through empty space."¹⁴² One of the most thorough descriptions of human-induced climate change came from Woodson's *Population, Pollution, and Prophecy*:

Continued dumping of our wastes into the air will ultimately so clog the biosphere that the rays of the sun will heat the particles so intensely as to raise the earth's temperature. A few degrees difference could be disastrous. With increased heat, the ice at the polar ice caps would melt and raise the level of our oceans enough to flood much of the land area. And with population figures soaring, the last things

¹⁴⁰ Kirban, *I Predict*, 30.

¹⁴¹ Kirban, *I Predict*, 55.

¹⁴² Macpherson, *God's Plan For This Planet*, 9.

we can afford to lose is a single acre of ground! All this is directly related: more people, more technology, more pollution.¹⁴³

Others like David Webber and Noah Hutchings informed readers in 1979 of the Smithsonian's prediction that the planet would be "ruined" by the year 2000 and the warning by the director of the University of Wisconsin's Environmental Institute that the "climate of the earth is changing in a direction that is not good." Despite such dire words from leading experts, Webber and Hutchings assured readers that "all this is predicted in the Bible for the last days."¹⁴⁴

According to Lindsey, had humanity not sinned in Eden there would be no need for "Earth Day advocates, Federal Water Quality boards, or Air Pollution Control departments," but in a fallen world such organizations were now vital.¹⁴⁵ Whereas the influential historian Perry Miller had once questioned whether Revelation's tribulation could be considered God's judgement and not a mere "contrivance"¹⁴⁶ if enacted by natural phenomena and human activity, premillennialists saw no such conundrum. If anything, human-induced ecological catastrophe only highlighted the destructive power of sin and further justified punishment when it fell. As Lindsey explained:

¹⁴³ Woodson, *Population, Pollution, and Prophecy*, 21.

¹⁴⁴ David Webber and Noah W. Hutchings, *Is This the Last Century?* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 1979), 125.

¹⁴⁵ Lindsey, *Satan Is Alive And Well On Planet Earth*, 56.

¹⁴⁶ Perry Miller, *Errand into the Wilderness* (New York, NY: Harper Torchbooks, 1956), 223-226.

We should note carefully at this point that the majority of these catastrophes are inflicted by man against man. To be sure, God is the ultimate source of the judgements, but He has a willing ally in the fallen natures of men. Ecologists tell us that man's selfishness threatens to pollute him off the planet, so God can't take all the blame when man succeeds in doing the job!¹⁴⁷

For all of the biblical and scientific warnings of the increasing destruction of the inorganic world, it was the threat the environmental crisis represented to life—human and animal—which most concerned premillennialists. Woodson warned that unless Americans took rapid and drastic action to address pollutants, the human species would be reduced to “loathsome vermin crawling in a dunghill”—or worse, “the entire human family may be obliterated.”¹⁴⁸ Fellow prophecy writer Bill McKee predicted that continued pollution of the air and water would only lead to rampant disease, especially among the poorest nations.¹⁴⁹ Modern humans had so “ravaged the purity of the biosphere,” wrote Kirban, that every American—from college students to the President—was now aware of the need for conservation programs “if we hope to live at all!”¹⁵⁰

Premillennialists took seriously the well-being of animals and the maintenance of their proper ecological niches. Kirban warned of the damage being wrought by invasive species like the “walking catfish” and Formosan Termites as well as the “wild strains of insects” which have adapted to insecticide overuse and were now rampaging across the

¹⁴⁷ Lindsey, *There's A New World Coming*, 136.

¹⁴⁸ Woodson, *Population, Pollution, and Prophecy*, 19.

¹⁴⁹ Bill McKee, *The Return: 28 Things To Look For Before Jesus Returns* (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House, 1972), 27.

¹⁵⁰ Kirban, *I Predict*, 50.

country.¹⁵¹ Another premillennialist encouraged believers to establish food gardens in preparation for worsening conditions, but cautioned against the use of chemical pesticides.¹⁵² Even when humans were not using chemical means of slaughter, Kirban criticized those methods which relied on excess cruelty—featuring a full-color photo of Canadian hunters standing over clubbed seal carcasses, the white ice around stained a deep red. He linked the cruel practice of clubbing and skinning still-living seal pups with Revelation’s prophesy of a third of the ocean turning to blood.¹⁵³ One premillennial tract, imagining a time when the Antichrist’s totalitarian state demands that schoolchildren perform animal sacrifices, depicted faithful Christian parents pleading with their child: “Son, you should *love* animals!”¹⁵⁴

Loving humans in the midst of rapid population growth was a more complex issue premillennialists wrestled with. As early as the second century, the premillennial Church Father Tertullian had worried about the planet’s carrying capacity and wrote of how the abundance of humanity “weigh upon the world; its resources hardly suffice to support us.”¹⁵⁵ By 1954, *Foursquare Magazine* reported that food producers were struggling to “squeeze a decent living for two billion people” out of the Earth’s land.¹⁵⁶ For all of the

¹⁵¹ Kirban, *I Predict*, 95.

¹⁵² Bates, *Projection For Survival*, 17.

¹⁵³ Kirban, *Your Last Goodbye*, 64-65.

¹⁵⁴ Jack T. Chick, *The Last Generation* (Rancho Cucamonga, CA: Chick Publications, 1972).

¹⁵⁵ Quoted in Susan Power Bratton, *Six Billion & More: Human Population Regulation and Christian Ethics* (Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1992), 76.

¹⁵⁶ McKee, *The Return*, 23.

commands which humanity had fallen short in obeying, the charge to fruitful and multiply was not one of them. As Woodson wrote, “we have *overdone* it!” He went so far as to wonder if, by reducing infant mortality rates so greatly, humans had “interfered too much with nature’s simple remedies for overpopulation?”¹⁵⁷ McKee told readers that many nations were already unable to feed their populations as “the situation verges on crisis.”¹⁵⁸ Burgess saw little hope for amelioration as unstoppable population growth had already “caused the grim specter of world famine to become a certainty.”¹⁵⁹ Although prophecy writers by and large avoided the temptation to set dates, Lindsey was not afraid to retroactively set dates regarding the population crisis, agreeing with scientists William and Paul Paddock that the “age of famines officially began in 1974.”¹⁶⁰

Although critics often accused premillennialists of otherworldliness, these prophecy writers argued that it was actually the mysticism promoted by men like White which encouraged “escapism” among young people and biblical hope was needed to keep them grounded and engaged in fighting global issues.¹⁶¹ Lindsey told reporters that it was precisely the hope of the Rapture that kept him from “dropping out in complete despair.”¹⁶² Even when discussing the Rapture, these writers kept a close eye on the

¹⁵⁷ Woodson, *Population, Pollution, and Prophecy*, 10, 17-18.

¹⁵⁸ McKee, *The Return*, 23.

¹⁵⁹ Burgess, *Israel, the Church, and the Coming Armageddon*, 50.

¹⁶⁰ Hal Lindsey and Carla C. Carlson, *The Terminal Generation: Could We Be Plunging Toward The Greatest Crisis We Will Ever Face?* (Old Tappan, NJ: Fleming H. Revell, 1976), 62.

¹⁶¹ William J. Petersen, *Those Curious New Cults in the 80s* (New Canaan, CT: Keats Publishing, 1982), 301.

¹⁶² Lindsey and Carlson, *The Terminal Generation*, 173.

Earth's conditions, with Woodson writing that at the very least the "exit of millions of the Lord's people" would grant the world "a temporary respite to the population problem."¹⁶³ Even evangelical scientists saw little reason why premillennial beliefs should discourage environmental concern, noting that while Christ would return and set all things including population right, in the meantime Christians were still to "favor those trends that ameliorate the living conditions of our nations."¹⁶⁴ Others wrote in support of population control measures as the only effective means of reducing pollution. For one premillennial physicist at the University of South Carolina, supporting population and pollution measures—even though it would ultimately be God who will set such issues right—was no less futile than encouraging missionaries despite the Bible's assurance that the world would not be converted prior to Christ's return.¹⁶⁵

While premillennialists encouraged action to address overpopulation, they maintained deep reservations about contraception by means of coercion. For Kirban, the debates among physicians over the safety of the "Pill" fit within the broader discussion of chemical pollutants and insecticides as threats to human health.¹⁶⁶ He predicted that the combination of pollution, nuclear fallout, and the "Pill" would lead to the rise of new

¹⁶³ Woodson, *Population, Pollution, and Prophecy*, 36.

¹⁶⁴ Russell L. Mixter, "The Population Explosion," *Journal of the American Scientific Affiliation* 25, no. 1 (March, 1973), 12.

¹⁶⁵ Frank H. Giles, Jr., "Consulting Editors Respond...", *Journal of the American Scientific Affiliation* 26, no. 1 (March, 1974), 16-17.

¹⁶⁶ Kirban, *I Predict*, 75.

diseases.¹⁶⁷ Woodson feared that the institution of marriage would disintegrate and leave humans “breeding like animals in the field.”¹⁶⁸ In his fiction, Kirban imagined the Antichrist’s dystopian world government sterilizing the masses via chemicals in the water supply and requiring “birth coupons” from couples who wished to procreate. At the same time, these premillennialists also condemned “prudish Puritanism” and the misguided belief that “if any pleasure was experienced, that made it sin.”¹⁶⁹ These writers also maintained a sense of compassion for women making such reproductive decisions, highlighting how hundreds of thousands had been hospitalized following illegal abortions and how city hospitals spent millions caring for those injured by “quacks who use coat hangers, kitchen knives, castor oil, or gasoline.”¹⁷⁰

While premillennialists believed that human intervention was necessary in regard to the birth rate, they were much less receptive to such intervention in the process of reproduction itself. Schaeffer, ever concerned with the integrity of the human body, had sounded the alarm on genetic engineering early in 1970. Calling it the “biological bomb” with more potentially disruptive power than the hydrogen bomb, he predicted that within twenty years humanity would be able to “make the kind of babies we want to make.”¹⁷¹

¹⁶⁷ Kirban, *I Predict*, 75.

¹⁶⁸ Woodson, *Population, Pollution, and Prophecy*, 14. Like Schaeffer and Lindsey, Woodson accepted a large degree of ambiguity when it came to interpreting Genesis, writing “No one knows how old the earth is or precisely how long ago man appeared on the scene.” Woodson, *Population, Pollution, and Prophecy*, 9.

¹⁶⁹ Bates, *Projection For Survival*, 59.

¹⁷⁰ Kirban, *Your Last Goodbye*, 25.

¹⁷¹ Schaeffer, *The Church At The End of The 20th Century*, 87.

In considering the modern trend toward hyper-specialization, premillennialists worried that experiments might begin with attempts to “design” humans for specific occupations in hostile environments, but ultimately would lead to the break down the family unit and destroy one’s sense of human belonging.¹⁷² Kirban worried that genetically cloned automatons possessing “no thinking mind” could be developed in mass and would be of “extreme value to an Antichrist” in need of soldiers and bureaucrats.¹⁷³ Coupled with a “miniature radio apparatus” capable of brain control, these writers foresaw a day when governments could customize and control zombie armies.¹⁷⁴ While such speculation may seem outlandish, even the scientifically grounded Anderson foresaw how genetic technologies could “precipitate authoritarian programs” and cautioned that the modification of human biological nature should only be supported if it enhanced “our capacity to behave responsibly toward God.”¹⁷⁵

Ultimately, these prophecy commentators saw the trend of increasing technological sophistication—and especially the growing ubiquity of computers—as a dehumanizing one. Writing decades before a cashless society dominated by wireless social networks containing easily-accessible profiles of individuals’ full life histories and psychological profiles became mundane reality, the perceptivity of these writers in

¹⁷² Kirban, *I Predict*, 79.

¹⁷³ Kirban, *I Predict*, 34.

¹⁷⁴ Kirban, *I Predict*, 79.

¹⁷⁵ V. Elving Anderson, “Biological Engineering and the Future of Man,” Carl F. H. Henry, ed., *Horizons of Science: Christian Scholars Speak Out* (San Francisco, CA: Harper & Row, 1978), 172-173.

tandem with the rich imagery of biblical prophecy appears downright prescient today. Premillennialists had long been concerned with the potential of electronic calculations, with one writer in 1950 reporting on the possibility of creating an “Electronic Brain,” though scientists at the time dismissed such a machine as impossible.¹⁷⁶ By the mid-1970s, Petersen could write that “the more man worked with computers, the more he seemed like a robot himself.”¹⁷⁷ What humanity remained, wrote Kirban, would be left vulnerable and exposed through such technology. Soon, he rightly predicted, it would be possible “at the push of a button to expose the entire life history of an individual” and every home would possess a computer which could be used by government agencies to spy on oneself “as if you lived in a glass house.”¹⁷⁸

Premillennialists’ distrust of computers came not from the fallibility of such technology but rather from its seemingly miraculous accuracy. That writers were able to overcome their concerns over computationally-derived data and accept the population forecasts produced by the Club of Rome’s computers demonstrates the seriousness with which they took the ecological crisis.¹⁷⁹ At the same time, they held little hope that computer technology would help solve the growing crisis and instead would be used to

¹⁷⁶ Billy Adams, “Flying Saucers and Men from Mars,” *Foursquare Magazine* 22, no. 6 (June, 1950), 7.

¹⁷⁷ Petersen, *Those Curious New Cults*, 14.

¹⁷⁸ Kirban, *I Predict*, 17, 46.

¹⁷⁹ Lindsey, *There’s A New World Coming*, 106; The only serious attempt by premillennialists to use computers for calculating the future came from the Center for the Study of the Future, an “information gathering service” located in Portland, Oregon, and directed by “engineer and computer specialist” Carl Townsend. The center never gained much traction however and was even listed as a “New Age” organization by the 1983 *Religion in America* directory.

beam the suffering of starving populations into American homes. Computer technology, they foresaw, would then facilitate the nationalization of supermarkets and the requirement for all to take the Mark of the Beast (likely a microchip implanted under the skin) in order to buy or sell.¹⁸⁰ As the bombastic Bates declared, computers were capable of performing “millions of calculations PER SECOND...just in time for the TRIBULATION.”¹⁸¹ Computers had long been seen by premillennialists as the perfect means for the prophesied Beast to “control every person on the globe.”¹⁸² By the time the 1980s began, some premillennialists would even imagine the presence of a supercomputer within a restored Herod’s temple as fulfilling the prophesied “abomination of desolation.”¹⁸³

This is not to say that premillennialists were committed luddites. Much as they had been early adopters and supporters of radio technology, they certainly appreciated space-age transportation and communications technologies for helping to spread the Gospel message.¹⁸⁴ In fact, the launching of the “Telstar” communications satellite appeared as the fulfillment of those prophecies that the Gospel would be preached to every nation.¹⁸⁵

¹⁸⁰ Kirban, *I Predict*, 69.

¹⁸¹ Bates, *Projection For Survival*, 39.

¹⁸² Jack T. Chick, *The Beast* (Rancho Cucamonga, CA: Chick Publications, 1966).

¹⁸³ Donald W. Thompson, *Image of the Beast*, Mark IV Pictures, 1981.

¹⁸⁴ “Space Age Teaching Tools,” *Christianity Today* 3, no. 23 (August 31, 1959), 7.

¹⁸⁵ “Telstar Launching Suggests Fulfillment of Bible Prophecy,” *Christianity Today* 6, no. 22 (August 3, 1962), 22.

Although not as dourly pessimistic as their theological and secular counterparts often painted them, premillennialists' eschatological outlook did predispose them toward skepticism of modernity's claims of inexorable progress. While they, in principle, supported the endeavors of science, capitalism, and the United States, they often maintained a critical gaze and were quick to observe the methodological shortcomings and destructive excesses of each. Anderson had reassured *Christianity Today* readers in 1964 that scientific explanations were "never final or ultimate" and that scientists could "never explore all of reality." Fifteen years later, as faith in scientism continued to grow, *Christianity Today* hoped that the Christian faith could offer a methodologically bounded "science of limits" along with setting spiritual boundaries to economic growth.¹⁸⁶ Kirban believed that humanity's progress would play a large role in bringing about the Tribulation's judgements as many could be the inevitable result of "man's own greed and so called 'progress' that brings with it problems unsolvable."¹⁸⁷ Notions of inevitable progress appeared at odds with the ecological situation and the simple formula employed by premillennialists: "As man's technology improves, man's chances for existing upon earth decreases."¹⁸⁸

Cold War premillennialists were often ardently anti-Communist, but this did not mean that they turned a blind eye to the excesses of capitalism (particularly its tendencies

¹⁸⁶ V. Elving Anderson, "Eutychus and His Kin," *Christianity Today* 9, no. 5 (December 4, 1964), 23; Harold B. Kuhn, "The Science of Limits: The Human Side," *Christianity Today* 23, no. 25 (November 2, 1979), 88.

¹⁸⁷ Kirban, *I Predict*, 35.

¹⁸⁸ Kirban, *I Predict*, 65.

toward corruption, inequality, and consumerism) or were willing to blame every social ill on communist influence. As early as 1910, conservative evangelicals like Isaac Haldeman were infusing their premillennialism with anticapitalist rhetoric and chastisements of those rich who growing richer through dishonest means and at the expense of the poor. Haldeman, the pastor of the First Baptist Church of New York City, wrote that the Bible prophesied that prior to the Second Coming, a class of “rich men” would grow so exorbitantly wealthy that “the great laboring class would rise in bitterness against them. The sign is here!” The “congested wealth” of the early 20th century threatened the liberty of individuals, the sovereignty of nations, and “the righteousness and integrity of the earth.”¹⁸⁹ C. I. Scofield felt similarly when he wrote sympathetically of the Creation awaiting its final relief from the “avarice” of profit-driven men seeking only the “ruthless use of her powers.”¹⁹⁰ This trend would only intensify in the postwar decades, leading historian Paul Boyer to credit premillennialists with producing “some of the most outspoken denunciations of consumer capitalism promulgated in America since 1945.”¹⁹¹

Francis Schaeffer, tracing the long history of Western civilization, acknowledged that on average people were better off following the Industrial Revolution but criticized how the enormous wealth industrialization produced “was not used with compassion.” In

¹⁸⁹ Isaac M. Haldeman, *The Signs of the Times*, third edition (Toronto, Canada: Evangelical Publishers, 1910), 20-21; Haldeman’s critiques of capitalism did not, however, mean that he was in favor of socialism. In direct contrast to the atomic dream of postmillennialist David Meldrum’s remodeled Earth, Haldeman saw the uneven features of the planet as proof that society would always be uneven to a degree. “Examination of the earth’s construction will show inequalities... The same inequality is to be found in human life.” Haldeman, 280.

¹⁹⁰ Scofield, *What Do The Prophets Say?*, 171.

¹⁹¹ Boyer, *When Time Shall Be No More*, 289.

particular, he faulted the church for failing to “lift its voice” against that “utilitarianism” characterized by “the vast wealth of the few and the misery of the many.”¹⁹² Premillennial tracts openly mocked the futile attempts of the ultra wealthy to hoard and preserve their fortunes.¹⁹³ Sounding very much like Schaeffer, Petersen wrote: “The steel and concrete societies of our day care nothing about nature. So nature is raped and ravaged, soil is eroded, rivers are polluted, air is contaminated.” All of which hindered the appeal of evangelicalism to young people who, like the hippies, were choosing to “drop out of the sacrilegious rat race and become a part of the rhythm of nature.”¹⁹⁴ William Petersen, the oft-cited researcher of cults and youth trends in the postwar decades, wrote to those looking to minister to the next generation that the gravity of the crisis had “convinced youth that Mother Nature was one mother who should not be rebelled against but rather should be loved.”¹⁹⁵ Others, like Leon Bates, cited scientists and economists who pointed to capitalism’s unsustainable dependency on oil as a warning sign of its impending collapse.¹⁹⁶

Kirban offered many of the genre’s strongest critiques of economic injustice. While noting that *some* businesses maintained ecologically responsible standards, most were “more interested in profits than in making a better world” and were rapidly

¹⁹² Schaeffer, *How Should We Then Live?*, 116.

¹⁹³ Jack T. Chick, *How to Get Rich (And Keep It)* (Rancho Cucamonga, CA: Chick Publications, 1978).

¹⁹⁴ Petersen, *Those Curious New Cults*, 45.

¹⁹⁵ William J. Petersen, *Those Curious New Cults* (New Canaan, CT: Keats Publishing, 1975), 18.

¹⁹⁶ Bates, *Projection For Survival*, 27.

transforming the United States into a “mass dumping ground.” Such businesses were helmed by “super-rich Americans” who often successfully avoided paying “a single penny” in taxes while the poorest continued to pay their share. In fact, he directly compared the business tactic of forming corporate “conglomerates” to the political tactics he foresaw being used by the Antichrist to bring the nations of the world under his control.¹⁹⁷ Kirban even contrasted the concerns of ecologists over the population explosion with the anticipation many business leaders likely felt as they waited “restlessly” for a skyrocketing birthrate to “power the economy in the mid 1970s.” Lamenting the sexual permissiveness sweeping the nation, he mused that such licentiousness and resulting population boom was creating a “paradise for those men who are merely seeking more profits to bolster their business operations.”¹⁹⁸ Kirban had a simple equation: “MASSIVE PRODUCTION = MASSIVE FILTH.” He criticized Americans for producing 50% of the world’s industrial pollution, including the millions of automobiles junked each year.¹⁹⁹ This rising tide of garbage extended even to outer space as he criticized First World nations for using space as “a floating junk shop” and openly wondering “can this be heaven” as orbiting debris increased daily.²⁰⁰ He went so far as to write that one of the indicators of the Last Days was the trend by “evangelical

¹⁹⁷ Kirban, *Your Last Goodbye*, 110, 116-118.

¹⁹⁸ Kirban, *Your Last Goodbye*, 100-101.

¹⁹⁹ Kirban, *I Predict*, 9.

²⁰⁰ Kirban, *Your Last Goodbye*, 51.

churches to spent vast amounts of monies on building projects and non-essentials.”²⁰¹ He even predicted that such extravagance would lead to a “popular revolt against the church.”²⁰²

Premillennialists were equally willing to criticize the United States. Whereas opponents during WWI had charged premillennialists with disloyalty bordering on treason, they now often accused them of blind, unbiblical patriotism. Both were exaggerations which intentionally obscured complex negotiations. A fundamentalist like Smith might proudly declare: “I am an American nationalist. I love the smell of America.”²⁰³ But such statements were balanced against others criticizing the United States for having “committed itself to policing the whole world” in pursuit of hegemony and making itself into “one of the ripest lands on earth for a tyrant.”²⁰⁴ Smith and other fundamentalists brooked no pretense as to where their loyalty ultimate lay. “I am not going to hell with my country,” wrote Smith. “When this Government is finished, I have another Government on High.”²⁰⁵ Premillennial writers called for “responsible patriotism” that refused to blindly support the decisions of charismatic politicians. Such

²⁰¹ Kirban, *I Predict*, 18.

²⁰² Kirban, *I Predict*, 83.

²⁰³ Noel Smith, “News and Comments,” *Baptist Bible Tribune* 1, no. 20 (November 10, 1950), 3.

²⁰⁴ Noel Smith, “An Era of Sorrow,” *Baptist Bible Tribune* 1, no. 15 (October 16, 1950), 4.

²⁰⁵ Noel Smith, “America’s Impending Calamities And How Christian People Should Face Them, Part VII: What Lies Ahead Of Us And How We Should Face It,” *Baptist Bible Tribune* 9, no. 19 (November 21, 1958), 5.

calls took on a deadly seriousness for premillennialists who believed that the Antichrist would soon arise as the most charismatic leader in history.²⁰⁶

Ecology, prophecy, and patriotism intersected in premillennialists' minds as polluted landscapes made it increasingly difficult for them to maintain a sense of pride in the land they called home. Kirban believed the United States was only mere decades away from the "cancerous growth" of the industrial complex engulfing the nation's pastoral regions and making the song "America the Beautiful" an anachronism.²⁰⁷ Premillennialists pointed with shame to the fact that Americans made up only 6% of the world's population but consumed 35% of its raw materials and quoted biologists who estimated that every baby born in the United States "represents 50 times as great a threat to the planet as each Indian baby."²⁰⁸ Bates pointed to the national sin of gluttony, contrasting over-indulgent Americans with the millions who starved daily.²⁰⁹ Dr. Carl Reidel called on evangelicals to "face up to their own measure of guilt" as they often fed their pets higher-quality sources of protein than was available to the non-American workers who had harvested the fish.²¹⁰ They criticized the development of supersonic jets on account of both their potential for disrupting the global climate and the fact that they would only benefit elite travelers. Calling such investment "just one prime example of

²⁰⁶ Kirban, *666*, 10.

²⁰⁷ Kirban, *666*, 59.

²⁰⁸ Kirban, *I Predict*, 81.

²⁰⁹ Bates, *Projection For Survival*, 9.

²¹⁰ Carl H. Reidel, "Christianity and the Environmental Crisis," *Christianity Today* 15, no. 15 (April 23, 1971), 6.

national priorities gone astray,” they instead called for “a billion dollars spent on local rapid transit” which would benefit the masses and produce less pollution.²¹¹

Critiques of the United States came easily to premillennialists given the apparent absence of the nation in the Bible’s prophecies. Some of the strongest evidence that even the most seemingly outlandish predictions were actually grounded in a fixed interpretive framework is the striking absence of premillennial attempts to shoehorn the United States into prophecy. McKee saw the United States to be “doomed as a world power” and speculated that it might become a “satellite of the European Common Market—if not something worse.”²¹² Kirban flatly declared: “There is no specific prophecy regarding the United States in future events.”²¹³ Far from envisioning a postwar U.S. empire, even the most fundamentalist among them had little hope of prolonged American power: “One of the last good things that God gave [the world] was the American form of government. It is now destroying that.”²¹⁴

While premillennialists were in agreement that large-scale, drastic action had to be taken to address ecological problems, they remained ambivalent toward international organizations. They generally supported federal agencies like the EPA while remaining skeptical of the government as a whole. They encouraged international arms reduction

²¹¹ Reidel, “Christianity and the Environmental Crisis,” 6.

²¹² McKee, *The Return*, 60.

²¹³ Salem Kirban, *Questions Frequently Asked Me On Prophecy*, revised edition, (Huntingdon Valley, PA: Salem Kirban, Inc., 1981), 49. Originally published in 1972.

²¹⁴ Noel Smith, “The World State,” *Baptist Bible Tribune* 2, no. 27 (February 28, 1952), 7.

while still believing that institutions like the United Nations were “laying the necessary groundwork for the one-world government, the reins of which the coming Antichrist will easily pick up.”²¹⁵ At the same time, they cautioned against the Cold War temptation to attribute all U.S. turmoil to Communist influence. “Certainly Communism cannot be blamed for every ill,” wrote Kirban, before predicting that future U.S. power blackouts would be falsely attributed to Russian sabotage.²¹⁶ Given his observations in Vietnam, he also never hesitated to voice his suspicion of the U.S. government and its commitment to “lie when the occasion fits.”²¹⁷

Premillennialists did not limit their prophetic ecological critiques to the United States. Just as sin was a universal condition, so too was pollution now a global issue on a rapidly industrializing planet. Their writings discussed the dying rivers in Germany and Switzerland as well as the famines wrought by a changing climate that were sweeping the Global South. While they sought to avoid the excesses of McCarthyism and the Red Scare, they were honest in acknowledging: “...pollution isn’t the exclusive property of Americans. We’ve done a great job of killing Lake Erie, but the Soviet Union’s Lake Baikal is just as bad.”²¹⁸

They took a special interest in Israel and the mixed blessing that industrialization provided. Some, like Kirban, praised Israelis for their wise use of forest and water

²¹⁵ Woodson, *Population, Pollution, and Prophecy*, 60.

²¹⁶ Kirban, *I Predict*, 17, 99.

²¹⁷ Kirban, *I Predict*, 85.

²¹⁸ Widman, “When You’ve Seen One Beer Can You’ve Seen Them All,” 16.

resources, but were nervous as to how far-reaching the effects of industrialization in the Holy Land might be.²¹⁹ In his fictional novel, Kirban depicted the destruction of the Holy Lands under rapid industrialization. Bethlehem was now an industrial two “belching smoke from automobile and ammunition factories.” Smog engulfed the fields where angels had appeared to shepherds proclaiming the birth of Christ. The famous St. Peter’s fish was now extinct as chemical pollutants had choked all life from the Sea of Galilee. Even the Garden Tomb where Christ’s body had lain had been paved over to construct a “big super 8 lane highway” running from Tel Aviv to Haifa.²²⁰ Far beyond national borders, even the Space Race served as an ecological indictment of a sinful humanity that was reaching for the moon while despoiling the Earth.²²¹

Concern for the Creation stemmed directly from premillennialists’ belief that this present world survive into eternity as the New Heaven and (re)New(ed) Earth. Far from being annihilated and replaced, they believed the present Earth would be purified and restored to its original edenic condition. Hanson’s antagonistic claim that premillennialists spoke of the end of the world “as though it will be the end of God’s earth” finds little support in premillennial works up to this time. Prophecy writers of the 1970s quoted the 19th century premillennial geologist Edward Hitchcock’s scientific

²¹⁹ Kirban, *I Predict*, 20; A popular theory among these writers was that the reason for Russia’s future invasion of Israel (as the prophetic figure of “Gog and Magog”) would be its need for natural resources—whether that be the potash of the Dead Sea or yet-undiscovered oil reserves. McKee, *The Return*, 49.

²²⁰ Kirban, *666*, 43.

²²¹ Kirban, *I Predict*, 25.

reasoning to soothe concerns that the consuming fires of II Peter might annihilate the present Earth. “Heat, however intense, has no tendency to [annihilate matter], explained Hitchcock. “It only gives matter a new form.” Such apocalyptic fires, no matter how hotly they burned, would not diminish the Earth in any way but would purify it from the “contamination of sin.”²²²

This hope for a renewed (not replaced) Earth only energized premillennialists’ calls to action in the present. As Bates summarized: “Practical problems demand practical solutions...we NEED to take action NOW.” He reminded readers that “we who can should help, while we STILL CAN.”²²³ Martin LaBar, who reasoned that the ecological disasters of Revelation 6 and 8 might well be “the final result of the ecology crisis” offered one of the clearest summations of premillennialists’ apocalyptic style of environmentalism. Pointing to the promise in Revelation 21 and 22 of a new creation, he encouraged believers to “carefully tend the present creation, and at the same time look forward with a reverent mixture of fear and hope, mingled with shame, to the new one.”²²⁴ In this kingdom ruled by Christ, one wrote: “No longer will the air be polluted or the waters poisoned, and the beauty of the landscape will not be bulldozed away.”²²⁵

²²² Kirban, *Your Last Goodbye*, 320-321.

²²³ Bates, *Projection For Survival*, 15, 21.

²²⁴ Martin LaBar, “A Message to Polluters From The Bible,” *Christianity Today* 18, no. 21 (July 26, 1974), 12. Conservative readers were very receptive to LaBar’s message, writing in to say that environmentalism was “sound biblical theology” and an issue which they should not “dare leave to our more liberal colleagues.” Ronald Barclay Allen, “Attacking God’s Glory,” *Christianity Today* 18, no. 23 (August 30, 1974), 19.

²²⁵ Vance Havner, “I Shall Return,” *The King’s Business* 16, no. 10 (October, 1970), 26.

Lindsey, in the vernacular of the day, summed up both the science and the theology behind the “New” Earth of premillennialism: “Pollution will be passé. Jesus Christ is going to recycle the late great Planet Earth.”²²⁶

The Green Influence of Premillennial Missions: The Lausanne Movement

Along with prophecy paperbacks, another overlooked ecological function of premillennialism has been the urgency which it has lent to global mission efforts—which in turn have driven extensive contact between Western evangelicals and their brothers and sisters of the Global South.²²⁷ Over the course of the twentieth century, it was not uncommon for evangelicals training for mission work at Bible colleges to cut their studies short and rush off to remote fields with only their Bibles, so pressing was the belief that only moments remained to share the Gospel before Christ returned. Whether laboring in foreign lands, listening to non-American converts speaking at U.S. churches, or attending international conferences, premillennial-fueled missions brought evangelicals into direct contact with those who not only shared their faith but also bore the ecological burdens of their First World lifestyles. In 1974, it was at one such missions conference that believers from across the Global South took the stage and shared such

²²⁶ Lindsey, *Satan Is Alive And Well On Planet Earth*, 113.

²²⁷ Not only the Global South, but also the Arctic North. Arthur Bloomfield, who wrote on climate change from a premillennial perspective in 1956, credited missionaries from the northern extremes of Canada with making him aware of the situation: “The missionaries told me that the caribou are moving north because of the changing climate and many Eskimos are left destitute.” Arthur E. Bloomfield, *The Changing Climate: The Bible Story of Water* (Minneapolis, MN: Bethany Fellowship, 1956), 8.

concerns before the most diverse and wide-ranging assembly of believers in history of Christianity.

Roughly a decade prior, in 1966, the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association hosted its first “World Congress on Evangelism” in Berlin and the overwhelming response (over 1,200 evangelical leaders had attended) helped to convince Graham and others that a united, global evangelicalism could be a force on par with the Vatican and the World Council of Churches. Buoyed by such confidence, Graham’s organization began planning a series of “once a generation” conferences intended to connect evangelicals around the globe and provide a common set of goals for a movement that instinctively resisted hierarchy. Nearly 3,000 evangelicals representatives from 150 nations arrived in Switzerland on July 16, 1974, to attend the ten-day Lausanne Congress on World Evangelization on the shores of Lake Geneva’s turquoise waters.

It did not take long for those representatives from the Global South to make their voices heard. By the third night of the conference, a group of delegates calling themselves the “radical discipleship caucus” upended the planned events for the evening, demanding to speak to the gathered leadership about evangelicalism’s failure to take Christ’s calls for social justice seriously. The most powerful speeches came from the Latin American Theological Fraternity, particularly René Padilla of Ecuador and Samuel Escobar of Peru. Amidst their critiques of an American style of missions that was often focused more on impersonal, scientific efficiency in soul-winning and upholding the values of traditional U.S. conservatism, Padilla and Escobar also lambasted their Western

counterparts for their luxurious and ecologically-destructive standards of living. Padilla, who had studied at Wheaton College and was intimately familiar with the U.S. standard of living, condemned a style of missions devoted to perpetuating “American-culture Christianity” and reducing the Gospel to a “cheap product.” Preaching in Spanish to reverse the colonial experience and have his Western audience experience listening through a translator, he called for the application of “radical biblical ethics” to *resist* the world’s conditioning rather than simply *reflect* its consumerist values.²²⁸

Escobar spoke next and delivered what historian David R. Swartz considered to be the “coup de grâce” of the radical caucus’s grievances. Whereas Graham had opened the conference with his worry that a focus on social issues would diminish the preaching of the gospel, Escobar spoke for his caucus in declaring, “I would like to affirm that I do not believe in that statement.” Instead, he directly compared Western missionaries who ignored the plight of the people to those conquistadors who “carried both the sword and the cross, baptizing Indians before executing them.” Other representatives from the radical caucus spoke in favor of resisting Western imperialism and deferring to indigenous values while a few hinted that they would support the halting the exportation of Western missionaries to their lands until local church networks were strong enough to absorb the additional laborers without being compelled to also adopt their values.²²⁹

²²⁸ David R. Swartz, *Facing West: American Evangelicals in an Age of World Christianity* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2020), 97-98.

²²⁹ Swartz, *Facing West*, 108-110.

Confronted with their sins of neglect, the mood at Lausanne quickly shifted from celebration to repentance. Padilla's sermon received one of the conference's only standing ovations and lasted until the opening strains of a hymn burst forth and transformed the moment into one of reflective worship. Graham's brother-in-law, the Canadian evangelist Leighton Ford, called the conference and its disruption by the radical caucus a "bombshell" and an "awakening experience" which drove home the need for Western evangelicals to rethink their neglect of social issues. A few, such as Carl Henry (who had helped pioneer evangelicals' reengagement with social concerns in the United States in the 1950s), would later express mild frustration that the radical caucus had not been "a little more social" in formulating their positions as opposed to dramatically springing them on conference attendees. However, even the most conservative attending evangelicals had, according to Swartz, "imbibed some measure of the spirit of decolonization" with Graham repenting of associating the Gospel with "one particular system of culture" and the influential missionary Ralph D. Winter confessing that Christ had not died to "preserve our Western way of life."²³⁰

While premillennialists had been receptive to the findings of scientists regarding ecological deterioration, hearing firsthand of the suffering of fellow believers in environmentally vulnerable regions added a new spiritual depth to such concerns. At the

²³⁰ Swartz, *Facing West*, 108, 111; Ford quoted in René Padilla, editor, *Mission Between the Times* (Carlisle, UK: Langham Monographs, 2010), vii-viii; Carl F. H. Henry, "The Gospel and Society," *Christianity Today* 18, no. 24 (September 13, 1974), 67; Graham quoted in Daniel Salinas, *Latin American Theology in the 1970's: The Golden Decade* (Boston, MA: Brill, 2009), 26; Ralph W. Winter, "The Highest Priority: Cross-Cultural Evangelism," in *Let The Earth Hear His Voice: International Congress on World Evangelization, Lausanne, Switzerland*, edited by J. D. Douglas (Minneapolis, MN: World Wide Publications, 1975), 241.

conclusion of the Lausanne conference, its leadership drafted a “covenant” for the global movement which placed social concerns on equal footing with the Gospel message and sought the prophetic application of “the Word of God to the realities of the hour.” While the Lausanne Covenant sought to distance itself from the date-setting trend in prophecy, it did affirm a clearly premillennial eschatology and rejected postmillennialism’s “proud, self-confident dream...that people can ever build a utopia on earth.” This was not meant to imply passivity while awaiting Christ’s return, but rather to reinforce the principle that “to speak of Christ’s second coming is always to stimulate action” and should inspire believers “to give all our energy in the world of the Lord, because we know that our labour will not be in vain.” With such a mindset in place, the (mostly Western) drafters expressed “penitence for neglecting our Christian responsibility and for polarizing evangelism and social concern” as they affirmed that both comprised the Christian’s duty.²³¹

The conversation between Western and Global South evangelicals extended well beyond the conference itself and its covenant document. Months before the conference convened, its organizers had solicited papers for discussion at conference breakout groups and many of these topics continued to receive response papers afterwards. These sprawling discussions and debates—many of them touching on ecological concerns—were published in a volume titled *Let The Earth Hear His Voice*. According to Escobar,

²³¹ John Stott, *The Lausanne Covenant: Complete Text with Study Guide*, originally published in 1974 and reprinted in 1975 with accompanying exposition and commentary, (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2009), 11-12, 46, 82, 87-88.

the situation facing the modern Church was “quite different from that of New Testament day” as the challenges of freedom and justice now had to account for overpopulation, pollution, and “extreme forms of wealth and poverty.”²³² David L. McKenna, president of Seattle Pacific College, began his discussion of evangelism with a warning from ecology:

If only we had listened to God! In his earliest conversations with the man he created, God talked about the oneness of the earth and the stewardship of its resources. The ideas of a 'Global Village' and 'Spaceship Earth' are nothing new. But, as a symptom of our sin, we split the world into pieces of self-interest and blazed a trail toward extinction with our polluting wastes. Mercifully, God is speaking again. Our fantasies of selfish growth and unlimited resources have been exposed by ecological prophets wearing the mantle of Malthus. God must laugh as he hears us talking today about the oneness of the world and the management of resources as if we had just invented the first survival kit for the human race.²³³

Fellow premillennialists agreed, stressing the “eschatological dimension” of the ecological crisis as all the more reason as to why problems of pollution, poverty, and population should “serve to focus our attention on the importance of our brother.”²³⁴

Another, Rudy Budiman of Indonesia, advanced a line of thinking similar to Schaeffer’s in that humanity’s estrangement from Christ’s propitiatory death had alienated it from

²³² Samuel Escobar, “Evangelism and Man’s Search for Freedom, Justice and Fulfillment,” in *Let The Earth Hear His Voice: International Congress on World Evangelization, Lausanne, Switzerland*, edited by J. D. Douglas (Minneapolis, MN: World Wide Publications, 1975), 303.

²³³ David L. McKenna, “Christian Higher Education and World Evangelization: A Strategy for the Future,” in *Let The Earth Hear His Voice: International Congress on World Evangelization, Lausanne, Switzerland*, edited by J. D. Douglas (Minneapolis, MN: World Wide Publications, 1975), 649.

²³⁴ Myron S. Augsburger, “Christian Higher Education and World Evangelization,” in *Let The Earth Hear His Voice: International Congress on World Evangelization, Lausanne, Switzerland*, edited by J. D. Douglas (Minneapolis, MN: World Wide Publications, 1975), 670.

nature and that Christianity's failure to address these estrangements was hindering evangelism efforts. The conference organizers were impressed by Budiman's reasoning and agreed that issues of ecology "directly impinge on world relations, and on evangelization" before recommending further studies on the issue.²³⁵ Speaking directly on the issue of apologetics and evangelism, another premillennialist agreed that Christians had to be knowledgeable of current events to effectively share their faith and placed ecology at the top of their list of important topics in the 1970s.²³⁶

The conference's most direct and sustained discussion of ecology came from *Christianity Today* editor Harold Lindsell. According to Lindsell, humans were committing suicide by cutting themselves off from *both* the Creation and the Creator. In a tone virtually identical to most environmentalists of the time, he recited a litany of growing disasters:

Every great city of the world has had its atmosphere contaminated...the overpopulating of the planet by human beings will soon leave us with standing room only. The effects of radiation through atomic explosions have been serious. The balance of nature has been destroyed, sometimes without intention, by the use of pesticides and other pollutants....The lakes of Switzerland, the rivers of India, even the oceans of all the world, have been raped and exploited...The whale life in

²³⁵ Rudi Budiman, "The Theology of the Cross and of the Resurrection in Our Unique Salvation: Summary Report," in *Let The Earth Hear His Voice: International Congress on World Evangelization, Lausanne, Switzerland*, edited by J. D. Douglas (Minneapolis, MN: World Wide Publications, 1975), 1049.

²³⁶ Kenneth Hamilton, "Apologetics and Evangelization," in *Let The Earth Hear His Voice: International Congress on World Evangelization, Lausanne, Switzerland*, edited by J. D. Douglas (Minneapolis, MN: World Wide Publications, 1975), 1194.

the oceans will shortly become extinct...The air we breathe, the water we drink, the food we eat, all attest man's unceasing quest for ecological suicide.²³⁷

Lindsell spoke positively of Rachel Carson and her early warnings. He pointed to the Antarctic glaciers which now bore traces of gasoline fumes burned in California and to herds of sheep accidentally killed when the winds shifted during nerve gas tests. He warned of a growing faith in science that was no rivaling the Calvinistic doctrine of predestination—progress was inevitable and would produce heaven on Earth.²³⁸

Lindsell warned that science was not only developing new poisons which were saturating the environment, but was also developing cloning techniques which were threatening the integrity of the human itself. These efforts, he gravely predicted, might soon produce "the true superman, a scientific monster with great brain power, with physical strength and powers, with great beauty, but with the moral stature of an idiot." At the heart of such projects was a "homocentrism" which he argued "denigrated" God and placed humanity at the center of all things. However, none of these overwhelming disasters produced a sense of hopelessness or fatalism in Lindsell. Instead he charged the attending ministers to redouble their efforts to save the planet, warning that "the night is coming when all of us who know Christ can work no more."²³⁹

²³⁷ Harold Lindsell, "The Suicide of Man," in *Let The Earth Hear His Voice: International Congress on World Evangelization, Lausanne, Switzerland*, edited by J. D. Douglas (Minneapolis, MN: World Wide Publications, 1975), 422.

²³⁸ Lindsell, "The Suicide of Man," 422-425.

²³⁹ Lindsell, "The Suicide of Man," 425-426.

Lindsell's charge received a warm response from those gathered at Lausanne and as the conference organizers reviewed the global reports of ecological catastrophe they repeatedly linked such threats back to evangelism. In one of the conference's summary reports on evangelism, a committee suggested that in light of Western "cerebral" (scientism) civilization's break down a return to Creation as a "common ground" could prove effective in reaching the lost. This pivot toward nature would allow evangelicals to draw connections from the Creation to the Creator as well as restoring a necessary sense of creatureliness to a humanity bent on destroying that which it mistakenly saw as inferior.²⁴⁰ Ecology and evangelism went hand-in-hand within premillennialists' eschatological framework. Their emphasis on natural theology and the scientific investigation of the Creation as a means of uncovering divine truths (whether apologetic or apocalyptic) also drew a sharp line between them and Christianity Reconstructionists who utterly rejected such a hermeneutic in favor of their presuppositionalism. For Reconstructionists, such strict presuppositionalism left little room for an eco-sensitive approach to evangelism or environmentalism.

Returning home from the Lausanne Conference, evangelical leaders found themselves in the midst of the most tremendous decade their movement had ever experienced. The decade would see premillennial books like Lindsey's *The Late Great Planet Earth* break sales records (most best-seller lists refused to track religious titles),

²⁴⁰ V. S. C. Tyndale, "Apologetics in Evangelism Report," in *Let The Earth Hear His Voice: International Congress on World Evangelization, Lausanne, Switzerland*, edited by J. D. Douglas (Minneapolis, MN: World Wide Publications, 1975), 1204-1205.

Graham's *Explo '72* conference draw over 100,000 young people to its evening concert series (and help launch popular Christian music as a national genre), *Time* magazine declare 1976 to be the "Year of the Evangelical," and the nation's first "born again" President occupy the White House following the election of Jimmy Carter. Evangelicalism was hip, popular, and—as evidenced by Graham's close friendships with both Democratic and Republican Presidents—relatively non-partisan. National political mobilization by conservative evangelicals would not emerge until the 1980s and the movement's close (though rarely unconditional) association with the Republican party until the 1990s. However, far from the spotlight, Rushdoony was also busy growing his Reconstructionist movement—publishing several of movement's cornerstone texts and recruiting its most influential leaders. Years before the organizing of the Moral Majority and the Religious Right, Rushdoony and his expanding network were hard at work laying the foundations of a political vision that was postmillennial, theonomic, and anti-environmental.

The Birth of Christian Reconstructionism

Despite its growing global and national influence, the world of U.S. evangelicalism could be surprisingly small at times. In 1970, while still serving as a Youth for Christ worker and not yet the face of dispensational premillennialism, Lindsey began a new ministry he called the "Jesus Christ Light and Power Company" in an old fraternity house near the campus of the University of California at Los Angeles. Offering

sanctuary and the Gospel to curious and seeking UCLA students, Lindsey's grassroots ministry regularly hosted visiting speakers, including both Schaeffer and Rushdoony. The three men knew each other well, though they would come to split along eschatological lines. While Schaeffer, in his later efforts to combat "secular humanism" would continue to promote certain aspects of what might be called "post-Reconstructionism"²⁴¹, Lindsey would become a lifelong opponent of Reconstructionism and a perennial target of Rushdoony's postmillennial disciples. For Reconstructionists over the next several decades, influencing the larger stream of evangelicalism would necessitate tactics ranging from selectively accommodating the more popular dispensationalism (such as Rushdoony's sermons at Lindsey's fraternity house) to attacking its very existence.

Rushdoony began the decade with the publication of *Law & Liberty*, a book in which he expanded on his criticisms of socialism and the Malthusian reasoning that informed much of environmentalism. Defining socialism as "the *scientific* answer to problems of society", Rushdoony warned readers that the federal government was, in effect, "planning for famine" through its increasing reliance on science and technology in overseeing the nation's agriculture.²⁴² His presuppositional and providential

²⁴¹ Whereas Rushdoony and Reconstructionists insisted that theonomy (the consistent application of biblical law) was the *only* God-ordained framework for any society seeking to secure divine blessing and avoid judgement, post-Reconstructionists softened this position and promoted biblical law as *the best and wisest* framework among many by which a society could function without necessarily incurring judgement. Both Reconstructionism and post-Reconstructionism maintain a postmillennial outlook of inevitable Christian dominance, though post-Reconstructionism possesses a greater flexibility in attracting amillennial and premillennial evangelicals before gradually reorienting them toward postmillennialism. For a more detailed discussion of "post-Reconstructionism," see Chapters 5 and 6.

²⁴² Rousas J. Rushdoony, *Law & Liberty* (Nutley, NJ: Craig Press, 1971), 173.

understanding of history allowed him to crucially distinguish his prediction of coming famine from those of ecologists like Ehrlich whose warnings of overpopulation appeared regularly in premillennial writings. This differentiation highlights a common feature of Reconstructionism which has often led historians to misjudge its theological similarities with the rest of evangelicalism: the tendency of Reconstructionists to speak of society and impending disasters in ways that sound remarkably like premillennialists but which stem from radically different theological underpinnings and carry with them radically different calls to action.

Next he offered a brief overview of the continent's long history and argued that Native Americans had regularly experienced famine despite a sparse population. The arrival of European settlers dramatically increased the land's population along with its productivity and the resulting Christian society in America, once established, never experienced famine. Indigenous paganism had left the land barren, but "liberty, faith, and hard work" had made it "productive and rich."²⁴³ Now socialism and its scientific style of management again threaten to strip the land. Rushdoony's warnings were popular among the libertarian networks he remained a part of, but had much less reach among the evangelical mainstream which he desperately sought to influence. However, just two years later, Rushdoony would complete the first volume of his magnum opus and with it capture not only the attention of evangelicals everywhere, but launch a movement that continues to shape American life to this day.

²⁴³ Rushdoony, *Law & Liberty*, 186.

In 1973, Rushdoony published *The Institutes of Biblical Law* and with it, as historian Molly Worthen observed, “radicalized trends of thought long present in the Presbyterian and libertarian traditions in response to the crisis he perceived in American society.”²⁴⁴ Modeled on John Calvin’s *The Institute of the Christian Religion* (1536) and spanning the breadth of biblical law and its societal application, Rushdoony’s foundational work also featured scattered meditations on the natural world and the Christian’s relation to it. Notably, this first volume (volumes II and III would eventually be published in 1982 and 1999 respectively) maintained a measured fondness for the Creation lingering from his days in Duck Valley—a fond sensitivity that would disappear in subsequent writings.

Rushdoony’s environmental ethic was fairly straightforward: Because God had declared the created world “good,” humanity had no basis for treating “any part of creation with contempt” or in attacking it “as an alien and hostile force.”²⁴⁵ However, he did not interpret such “goodness” as bestowing a sense of perfection or completeness upon the present, fallen world. “What is natural is not therefore of necessity good,” he wrote before describing human dominion as “restorational and healing work.”²⁴⁶ He pointed to the Sahara Desert as proof that the Earth is capable of renewing itself when

²⁴⁴ Molly Worthen, “The Chalcedon Problem: Rousas John Rushdoony and the Origins of Christian Reconstructionism,” *Church History* 77, no. 2 (June, 2008), 404.

²⁴⁵ Rousas J. Rushdoony, *The Institutes of Biblical Law: Volume I* (Nutley, NJ: Craig Press, 1973; Vallecito, CA: Ross House Books, 1982-1999), 260, 265.

²⁴⁶ Rushdoony, *The Institutes of Biblical Law: Volume I*, 265.

permitted to rest and that it was only when a landscape was “exploited ruthlessly”²⁴⁷ that it would finally succumb to desertification:

When man destroys the soil, pollutes food and poisons the air and the water, he does pass a death sentence against himself. The extent of the pollution is very great, and it is aggravated by man’s confidence that “science” can somehow cope with it by some new artificial device.²⁴⁸

While promoting science and technology as the primary tools for extending humanity’s dominion over the Creation, Rushdoony was highly critical of that technological manipulation and “planned interference” which treated the world with disrespect. He approvingly cited ecologists Rachel Carson (whom he would later describe as a nihilistic feminist rather than a scientist) and Lewis Mumford in demonstrating how such a “degenerative perspective” had become fundamental to modern science and was now wreaking havoc.²⁴⁹ For those readers interested in learning more about the pollution created by such disrespectful science, he recommended J. I. Rodale’s *Our Poisoned Earth and Sky*. Clear examples of how scientific management could backfire were of particular interest to Rushdoony.²⁵⁰ He criticized the overuse of pesticides in Pennsylvania for

²⁴⁷ Rushdoony, *The Institutes of Biblical Law: Volume I*, 145.

²⁴⁸ Rushdoony, *The Institutes of Biblical Law: Volume I*, 146.

²⁴⁹ Rushdoony, *The Institutes of Biblical Law: Volume I*, 261.

²⁵⁰ At least some of Rushdoony’s antipathy for overly-scientific environmental regulation may have stemmed from the fact that his wife Dorothy would eventually suffer blindness following a rattlesnake bite—a creature protected by California law.

killing off bees and contrasted such technological interference with the more ecologically-respectful use of purple martins for pest control in Illinois.²⁵¹

Both Reconstructionists and historians regard *The Institutes of Biblical Law* as the moment which the Christian Reconstruction movement was born. While the volume's cautious warnings of pollution, scientism, and disrespect for nature received little attention, its reasoned application of biblical law holistically to society launched Rushdoony beyond merely a pet thinker of libertarian think tanks to a rising figure in the eyes of the evangelical mainstream. *Christianity Today*, which had previously scorned him, now lauded his thoughts as "without a doubt, the most impressive theological work of 1973."²⁵² *Institutes* even provided him with the publication credentials to begin serving as an expert witness in the growing number of education and religious freedom legal cases surrounding the early homeschool movement.²⁵³ However, the most important connection Rushdoony forged during the 1970s came from neither of these worlds, but rather from his libertarian ties. In 1963, a young intern for the William Volker Fund named Gary North sought out and introduced himself to the still relatively unknown

²⁵¹ Rushdoony, *The Institutes of Biblical Law: Volume I*, 263. Rushdoony would repeat the story of the Griggsville martins dozens of times across his sermons, recordings, and writings.

²⁵² Harold O. J. Brown, "Theology, Apologetics, and Ethics," *Christianity Today* 18, no. 11 (March 1, 1974), 70.

²⁵³ At the start of the 1970s, restrictive state laws regarding truancy and certification made homeschooling virtually impossible for most American families. Rushdoony, often credited as the "Father of the Christian Homeschool Movement," would help to spearhead legal challenges to such laws over the next three decades. He would also provide mentorship to John W. Whitehead, founder of The Rutherford Institute and one of the nation's preeminent "religious freedoms" attorneys. Rutherford's work would pave the way for the dramatic expansion of homeschooling rights in the United States.

Rushdoony. A decade later North married Rushdoony's daughter and joined him on the Chalcedon staff. If Rushdoony was the Christ-figure of Reconstructionism, North would become the movement's Paul—tirelessly promoting its doctrines and ruthlessly defending them (often unprovoked) against all challenges.

A brash and bespectacled defender of free markets and biblical law, North began reading Rushdoony's works in 1962 as a junior at UCLA. Within months he was corresponding with Rushdoony and intensely discussing of how to reconcile Christianity with libertarian economic theory. Thus began a relationship that historian Michael McVicar has described as “one of the most fascinating—and volatile—in the history of the Christian Right.”²⁵⁴ By 1965, North's developing thoughts persuaded Rushdoony to offer to mentor the budding economist and through his connections North was able to begin writing for the libertarian journal *The Freeman* while devouring the works of Ludwig Von Mises and Friedrich Hayek. Libertarians, for their part, were well aware of the preference which Reconstructionists had for their Austrian style of economics. While

²⁵⁴ Michael J. McVicar, “The Libertarian Theocrats,” *Public Eye* 22, no. 3 (Fall, 2007), 5.

they both ultimately possessed incompatible visions of the “good society,” they were natural allies in opposing the ever-growing powers of the State.²⁵⁵

North put his growing skillset to work upon arriving at Vallecito in 1973 as his father-in-law immediately tasked him with researching the relationship between biblical law and free-market economics. A year later, in 1974, North began publishing and editing the *Journal of Christian Reconstruction* with Rushdoony’s blessing—a journal intended to bring greater intellectual respectability to the fledgling movement and which, from its opening page, was expressly dedicated to “the fulfillment of the cultural mandate of Genesis 1:28 and 9:1—to the subdue to the earth to the glory of God.”²⁵⁶ Rushdoony and North’s blending of postmillennial utopianism and free market fundamentalism also attracted the attention of serious financiers like the wealthy Howard Ahmanson Jr. who soon joined the board of the Chalcedon Foundation and for the next twenty years would serve as one of its key financial contributors. Developing a properly Reconstructionist theology of economics quickly became North’s lifelong endeavor (he would work on it until his death) and in 1975 he founded the Institute for Christian Economics to operate

²⁵⁵ Timothy D. Terrell and Glenn Moots, “One Protestant Tradition’s Interface with Austrian Economics: Christian Reconstruction as Critic and Ally,” *Journal of Markets & Morality* 9, no. 1 (Spring, 2006), 107; Rushdoony’s own libertarian convictions would earn him the censure of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church during this time. In 1967, after his Chalcedon Foundation published a filmstrip referring to unbacked paper money as counterfeiting and inflation as larceny, Rushdoony found himself on trial for heresy. Though he survived the examination, the trial only furthered strained his relationship with the OPC and by 1970 he had completely withdrawn from the organization. Rousas J. Rushdoony, *The Institutes of Biblical Law: Volume I* (Nutley, NJ: Craig Press, 1973; Vallecito, CA: Ross House Books, 1982-1999), 549-550; Rousas J. Rushdoony, “The Moral Foundations of Money,” *The Chalcedon Foundation* (January 13, 1966).

²⁵⁶ Gary North, “The Journal of Christian Reconstruction,” *Journal of Christian Reconstruction* 1, no. 1 (Summer, 1974), 1.

alongside Rushdoony's Chalcedon. Even a stint in Washington D.C. the following year serving as a research assistant for congressional representative Ron Paul did little to slow North's Reconstructionist output—again described by McVicar as “a complex blend of Austrian economic theory, Van Til-inspired ethics, and acrid prose.”²⁵⁷

Christian Reconstructionism's Emerging Anti-Environmentalism

Amidst the prodigious publications that Rushdoony, North, and other early Reconstructionists churned out during these years, a distinctly postmillennial skepticism of the claims of environmentalists began to emerge. It was a skepticism which combined a cornucopian faith that Christian dominion, in accordance with biblical law, could *only* produce ecological flourishing with a libertarian insistence that the environmental crises were either the *result* of socialism or overblown scare tactics intended to drive people into its arms. At the same time as he was writing *Institutes*, Rushdoony published an article in which he outlined several key tenets that would become Reconstructionism's anti-environmentalism:

Production has polluted the world, the ecology people hold, ignorant of the greater pollution which preceded the Industrial Revolution, or of the times when the rivers of Europe were dead streams in a way beyond our present knowledge. The goal of the New Left is to sabotage the great seducer of the common man, production. Instead of realistic attempts at dealing with pollution, the "eco-freaks," the New Leftist exploiters of ecology and conservation, concentrate instead on destroying production. Through legislation and sabotage, production is hampered...It is the mark of the New Leftist aristocracy to despise mass

²⁵⁷ McVicar, “The Libertarian Theocrats,” 7.

production in the name of the masses, to hate an abundance which enables "the common man" to have as much as an intellectual²⁵⁸

Whereas premillennialists regularly condemned Americans' luxurious lifestyles, Reconstructionists found it biblically "necessary to dismiss the guilt feelings conjured up by these critics." Their reasoning was simple: The Bible declared that those people who "believingly submitted" to God's laws would prosper while those who did not would be "cursed spiritually, politically, and economically."²⁵⁹

In contrast to the premillennialists and secular environmentalists who raised concerns over the rapidly growing human population, Rushdoony continually used such discussions to pivot toward his own triumphalist history of Christian civilization and attacks on socialism. In an article titled "What Is Overpopulation?," Rushdoony wrote:

North America had a continuing problem of overpopulation before the coming of the white man. The Indian population was small, perhaps at most 250,000 to 300,000, and perhaps even less than half that number. Nevertheless, overpopulation was a continual problem, and it led to hunger, famine, and cannibalism...The coming of the white man increased the food supply, because the white man developed the earth.²⁶⁰

²⁵⁸ Rousas J. Rushdoony, "Imitation," *The Freeman* 23, no. 9 (September, 1973), 570.

²⁵⁹ Tom Rose, "America and the Underdeveloped World," *Biblical Economics Today* 2, no. 2 (April/May, 1979), 3-4.

²⁶⁰ Rousas J. Rushdoony, "What Is Overpopulation?" *The Freeman* 20, no. 2 (February 1, 1970), 98-100; Rushdoony had published many of these ideas in a small booklet titled *The Myth of Over-Population* just a few months prior. As in his article, the booklet blended his Reformed postmillennialism with libertarian principles and an anti-Malthusian, cornucopian belief that human progress (due in part to its growing population) was on a steady, inevitable incline.

In that same article Rushdoony combined his opposition to socialism with a eugenics-tinged concern for the quality of society's genetic stock. The only "population explosion" that ever occurred within welfare economies, he explained, were among the "worst segment of the population in ability, intelligence, and character."²⁶¹ Rushdoony, however, was not a eugenicist in the scientific sense. Rather, his concerns with quality and distinctiveness stemmed from his definition of holiness in accordance with biblical law. Every biblical law, he wrote in *Institutes*, was concerned with holiness and this holiness demanded "the principle of the cutting or separation" and was antithetical to all forms of hybridization.²⁶² Attempts at hybridization (both organic and social) represented "a fundamental disrespect for God's handiwork" and led to "futile experiments" involving organ transplants and sterility as well as the "loss of moral perspective in every area."²⁶³ This definition of holiness could lead to ecologically sensitive conclusions such as his insistence that biblical laws regarding the handling of human corpses to avoid defiling the soil meant that "the land itself must be regarded as separated and devoted to God."²⁶⁴ Still other early followers of Reconstructionism warned of a "population implosion" as they

²⁶¹ Rushdoony, "What Is Overpopulation?," 104.

²⁶² Rushdoony, *The Institutes of Biblical Law: Volume I*, 85.

²⁶³ Rushdoony, *The Institutes of Biblical Law: Volume I*, 266.

²⁶⁴ Rushdoony, *The Institutes of Biblical Law: Volume I*, 89; Rushdoony would later write that "the land is not only God's creation and possession, but His dwelling place [and] any sin within that realm defiles His land and Kingdom and requires satisfaction." Rousas J. Rushdoony, *Systematic Theology In Two Volumes* (Vallecito, CA: Ross House Books, 1994), 958.

imagined falling birthrates in the West might precipitate the collapse of socialist programs intended to support the elderly.²⁶⁵

While Reconstructionists' fundamental opposition to socialism shaped their anti-environmentalism, this did not mean that they opposed all federal involvement in ecological matters. One of the few valid, biblical duties reserved for the governmental sphere was that of enforcing property rights. North rejected the "spaceship earth" reasoning of ecologists, warning that it was attempting to leverage the "messianism of technological planning" to impose a world government system.²⁶⁶ In fact, while North blamed the energy crisis of the 1970s on environmentalists who blocked pipeline developments, he blamed the government more so for making environmental activism necessary in the first place. Had the courts strictly enforced property laws, he argued, oil companies would have been fully responsible financially for their spills, devised safer procedures, and thus the environment would have been protected.²⁶⁷ This emphasis on government-protected property rights as the surest protector of natural resources has remained a hallmark of Reconstructionist and post-Reconstructionist environmental thinking up to the present.

²⁶⁵ Lou Gasper, "The Population Implosion," *Biblical Economics* 1, no. 5 (October/November, 1978), 3.

²⁶⁶ Gary North, "The Mythology of Spaceship Earth," *The Freeman* 19, no. 1 (January, 1969), 685, 689.

²⁶⁷ Gary North, "How Not to Cure an Energy Crisis," *The Freeman* 24, no. 2 (February, 1974), 71.

One of the most subtle distinctions between Reconstructionists and premillennialists during these years was their suspicion of pagan and New Age influences. Premillennialists were deeply concerned about the inroads that paganism and cults were making, but they were careful to distinguish between nature-worship and valid, scientific environmentalism. Reconstructionists saw no such distinction. One of the grandfathers of Reconstructionism, Cornelius Van Til, wrote in their *Journal of Christian Reconstruction* that all such unbiblical views of the Creation are merely extrapolations of the pagan idea of monism. Recounting the words of the Apostle Paul on Mars Hill, he pointed to ecological thinkers like Pierre Teilhard de Chardin as failing to be “Creator-worshippers, instead of creature-worshippers.”²⁶⁸

North’s own eagerness to unmask such activity was evident in his book *None Dare Call It Witchcraft* in which he reported on such phenomena as “psychic surgeries,” UFOs, and spontaneous human combustion as evidence of growing Satanic activity. Whereas premillennialists saw increasing New Ageism as a sign of the impending End and distinct from environmentalism²⁶⁹, postmillennial Reconstructionists viewed such efforts at self-transcendence as a rival blueprint for establishing Heaven on Earth and one which was actively promoting false environmental concerns like overpopulation to win adherents. North summed up the Reconstructionist view of paganism as a temporary rival

²⁶⁸ Cornelius Van Til, “The Doctrine of Creation and Christian Apologetics,” *Journal of Christian Reconstruction* 1, no. 1 (Summer, 1974), 69, 77.

²⁶⁹ To provide just one example, although both the book and film versions of *The Late Great Planet Earth* warn of the growing popularity of New Ageism and feature interviews with witches and astrologers, at no point do either of them present environmentalism as a potential gateway to New Ageism or as a movement rooted in paganism.

rather than an apocalyptic harbinger, writing: “The society of Satan is therefore doomed to failure in the long run, but it can play havoc with Christian culture in the meantime.”²⁷⁰ Much like Rushdoony’s distinctly Reconstructionist warnings of population-induced famine, opposition to paganism—especially its assumed relation to environmentalism—has been another area in which this postmillennial sect has often appeared to mirror the rhetoric of premillennialists (much to the confusion of historians) but has represented radically different theological roots and carried competing solutions.

Perhaps the most overlooked distinction between premillennialists and Reconstructionists—but a distinction whose ramifications made all the difference in the world—was their views on impending disaster. It is important to note that premillennialists and postmillennial Reconstructionists believed they were operating on wildly different time scales. For premillennialists, the Earth might well be millions of years old but had perhaps only a single human generation remaining before Christ

²⁷⁰ Gary North, *None Dare Call It Witchcraft* (Rochelle, NY: Arlington House, 1976), 205-208. Reviewers of North’s book dragged him mercilessly for his uncritical acceptance of such phenomenon. As one review for the libertarian *Reason* magazine observed, North’s dislike of the “scientific establishment” exceeded even the counterculture at UC Riverside where he earned his degree in History. This reviewer concluded by charging North with amateurism and naivety, writing: “...a professional historian has written a book on the occult without having done one iota of original research on the subject and has unquestioningly accepted as fact the claims to be found in mass-market occult paperbacks and *True Detective* magazine.” Not even the comparatively non-academic premillennialists like Lindsey received such criticisms for their own paperbacks exposing occultism. Such a dismissal by his own libertarian allies deeply stung North and helped to fuel his increasingly confrontational style. Robert Scheaffer, “None Dare Call It Witchcraft,” *Reason* (July, 1977).

returned.²⁷¹ Reconstructionists felt no such urgency. Christ's return would occur only once the Gospel has converted the nations and biblical law had uplifted both society and nature to near-perfection. This advancing Christendom was inevitable, but (according to Reconstructionism's leading eschatologist David Chilton) might take tens of thousands of years to accomplish. Thus when premillennialists and Reconstructionists spoke of impending disasters and societal collapse, they referred to very different things. Specifically, premillennialists were deeply concerned with ecological dangers and viewed them as apocalyptic signs of the End while Reconstructionists were deeply concerned with economic dangers, but viewed them as Old Testament judgements for the transgression of biblical law. Not only did Reconstructionists *not* view looming disasters from the eschatological perspective of Tribulation, but they saw such potential catastrophes as opportunities for those who undertook proper preparations to emerge from the rubble, seize dominion, and greatly accelerate the postmillennial timetable.²⁷²

²⁷¹ As has been noted in the previous chapter, premillennialists and Reconstructionists have also differed in their time scales relating to the past. Historically, premillennialists have been amenable to viewing the Earth as much older than the literalistic six-thousand-year chronology would suggest. Following the arrival of Darwinism, premillennialists ranging from C. I. Scofield to the editors at Moody Press promoted various "gap theory" interpretations of Genesis which sought to accommodate the latest findings from science while also avoiding the constraints of strict literalism. Reconstructionists, based on their presuppositional approach to interpreting the Bible, were the most ardent promoters of Young Earth Creationism and the view of the Earth as being only six thousand years old.

²⁷² As will be discussed further in the conclusion, premillennialists viewed faithfulness as a potential means for *pushing back* God's prophetic clock. Whereas Reconstructionists took a long view of the future and believed that adherence to biblical law might provide opportunities for accelerating time, premillennialists believed that widespread revival and repentance might—as with the city of Nineveh in the book of Jonah—grant the world a reprieve and extend history by several more generations. Far from being otherworldly fatalists bent on ushering in The End, premillennialists believed that by their very faithfulness to preach the Gospel they might quite literally buy more time here on Earth.

Whereas premillennialists loudly proclaimed the findings of scientists warning of impending ecological disaster as proof of the coming Tribulation, Reconstructionists rejected such preaching. Instead they leaned on the findings of libertarian and Austrian economists who predicted economic—not ecological—collapse. It was the U.S. banking system, not the biosphere, which concerned them. By their own words, this form of this-worldly catastrophism was “not one which is emphasized by fundamentalist or orthodox churches” and North was always eager to explain the dominionist (rather than millennial) hope which infused their anticipation of societal collapse: “Power flows to those who are willing and able to take responsibility. Power flows to those who have taken the proper steps beforehand to deal with the problems that follow.”²⁷³ Rushdoony had discussed preparations for a coming disaster as early as *Preparation for the Future* in the early 1960s. Much like the premillennialists, Rushdoony believed that the present world was in fact heading toward disaster. However, unlike premillennialists, he saw no biblical hope of deliverance from the coming catastrophe and instead welcomed collapse as the great opportunity for prepared Reconstructionists to fill power vacuums:

The age of the state, the world of humanistic man, is committing suicide. We will be hurt in that process, but it is also a forerunner of our deliverance. More than ever, we must work to re-establish our roots in the Biblical faith and order, to establish new schools and institutions to rebuild society.²⁷⁴

²⁷³ Gary North, “God Will Take Care Of Me,” *Biblical Economics Today* 1, no. 6 (December/January, 1978), 2.

²⁷⁴ Rushdoony, “Imitation,” 572.

This Reconstructionist vision of catastrophe followed by victory would be most clearly spelled out a few years later and find its basis not in Bible's *prophecy* but in its *law*. In an issue of the *Journal of Christian Reconstruction* devoted to the topic of social action, Michael R. Gilstrap began by declaring it to be a "matter of faith" that the Christian "of all people, should be a survivalist."²⁷⁵ The reason for survivalism was that the coming disaster would not be apocalyptic in totality. Rather it would be localized (though still devastating) in the form of judgement against an American nation which was unrepentantly transgressing God's covenant laws. As Gilstrap explained, God "has told us in the Law, especially Deuteronomy 28, what will happen in a nation disobeys Him. It will be the sword of the Lord that draws the blood of Americans...America and western civilization will fall because of our sin, and for no other reason."²⁷⁶

Gilstrap predicted horrors ranging from "famine, drought, wars, plagues, pestilences, the raping of our sons and daughters, slavery, extreme poverty, and worse," but stressed that the committed Reconstructionist should give attention "not only to the crisis, but to the world on the other side of the crisis."²⁷⁷ Echoing North's plan for a biblical society rising from the ashes of a judged world, he asked readers:

Who will the leaders be in the new civilization?...[The] man who can best take advantage of existing opportunities for the betterment and well-being of himself

²⁷⁵ Michael R. Gilstrap, "A Biblical Basis For Survival Preparation," *Journal of Christian Reconstruction* 8, no. 1 (Summer, 1981), 156.

²⁷⁶ Gilstrap, "A Biblical Basis For Survival Preparation," 160.

²⁷⁷ Gilstrap, "A Biblical Basis For Survival Preparation," 160-161.

and others...Survival preparation is a means to dominion in a post-crash society.²⁷⁸

Gilstrap's catastrophism took on a chilling edge in his conclusion as he addressed the natural concern survivalist families might have toward fellow Christians who did not prepare:

It seems as plain as the nose on one's face that failure to prepare is an act of faithlessness. Faithlessness brings suffering and death. Those who choose not to prepare must suffer the consequences that God has determined for them.²⁷⁹

North was just as straightforward when he predicted that nuclear war was likely to break out soon: "I believe the bulk of what is now called the institutional Body of Christ will probably perish...God simply cannot deal with them, and He is going to let them die in the wilderness."²⁸⁰ Still, the fact that both premillennialists and Reconstructionists preached the near-approach of similar, civilization-ending calamities allowed many Reconstructionists to often preach messages that sounded familiar to premillennialists while smuggling in germs of Reconstructionist thinking. For academics studying these groups, the rhetorical similarities between their competing millennial messages has produced much confusion and obfuscation.

²⁷⁸ Gilstrap, "A Biblical Basis For Survival Preparation," 163.

²⁷⁹ Gilstrap, "A Biblical Basis For Survival Preparation," 164-165.

²⁸⁰ Dick Leggatt, "An Economic Forecast For The Eighties: A Personal Interview With Gary North," *Biblical Economics Today* 3, no. 3 (June/July, 1980), 2-3.

Despite their pessimism over the likelihood of their fellow Christians surviving the near future, these Reconstructionists were overjoyed by the growth they saw within their movement. While the Reconstructionist core would rarely consist of more than a dozen or so committed writers, the 1970s saw the addition of men like John W. Whitehead and Greg Bahnsen. Whitehead's legal work through his Rutherford Institute would spearhead many of the court cases which have shaped notions of "religious freedom" over the last several decades. Bahnsen's *Theonomy in Christian Ethics* (1977) would help to fully develop Rushdoony's framework for applying biblical law to contemporary society. Interestingly, many of the early converts to Reconstructionism were originally converted through premillennial ministries. Both North and Chilton initially converted to Christianity as dispensational premillennialists.²⁸¹ In 1974 Whitehead read Lindsey's *The Late Great Planet Earth* and (after resisting what he described as a "telepathic homosexual assault" by two fellow drug users) accepted Christ. He and his wife soon moved into Lindsey's Jesus Christ Light and Power Company ministry and it was there in 1976 that he met Rushdoony. Within a year, Rushdoony was directing Whitehead's research and granting the young lawyer access to his impressive personal library. The result was Whitehead's *The Separation Illusion* (1977) which

²⁸¹ Michael J. McVicar, *Christian Reconstruction: R.J. Rushdoony and American Religious Conservatism* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2015), 84; David Chilton, "Between the Covers of *Power For Living*," *Biblical Economics Today* 7, no. 2 (February-March, 1984), 3.

formulated many of the legal arguments that have sustained efforts by the Religious Right to secure and expand religious freedoms ever since.²⁸²

As the Chalcedon Foundation and the Institute for Christian Economics continued to add staff and increase their publication output, the future looked bright for Reconstructionism. However, far from simply biding their time as slow kingdom efforts continued apace, Rushdoony and his disciples sought to actively increase their influence. Mainstream evangelicalism, with its (in the view of Reconstructionists) misguided emphasis on piety over biblical law and its non-partisan premillennialism, was fast becoming a dominant force in American society and Reconstructionists saw directing this movement as the ultimate prize. Their opportunity for establishing a beachhead within an evangelicalism that was eschatologically opposed to the very kingdom they sought to build would come early in the next decade as they sought allies among the most unlikely of candidates: charismatic Pentecostals.

²⁸² McVicar, *Christian Reconstructionism*, 164-165.

3: TARES AMONG THE WHEAT: THE 1980S AND THE POLITICIZATION OF EVANGELICAL ENVIRONMENTALISM

The 1980s began with an unusual sight: twelve conservative evangelical leaders seated around a breakfast table at the White House. Jimmy Carter, the nation's first openly "born again" President, was painfully aware of the disappointment religious leaders across the political spectrum felt with his administration and hoped to mend ties with the most conservative faction in advance of the upcoming election. The day before at the Washington Hilton, Carter had spoken to a much larger crowd gathered for a conference of the National Religious Broadcasters. However, at the insistence of his staff, Carter had invited this smaller group—which included Jerry Falwell, James Kennedy, Charles Stanley, Jim Bakker, Rex Hubbard, Oral Roberts, Tim LaHaye, and a representative from Billy Graham's ministry—to meet in a more intimate setting that morning of January 22, 1980.¹ The breakfast could have hardly gone worse for the President. Carter's biographer, historian Randall Balmer, would call it a "disaster" and evangelicals would not disagree, with LaHaye describing it as a "monumental mistake" on Carter's part. However, while Balmer would argue that these evangelicals arrived with no intention of listening to the President and had "already abandoned Carter," LaHaye

¹ The meeting was all the more urgent given that Carter had recently declined to speak at the momentous "Washington for Jesus" rally being organized by conservative evangelicals for that coming April. The rally would draw 200,000 Christian voters to the Washington Mall—voters who had not yet committed themselves to the eventual winner Ronald Reagan, given that Carter was the only candidate invited to speak by the organizers. Randall Balmer, *Redeemer: The Life of Jimmy Carter* (New York, NY: Basic Books, 2014), 124.

wrote just a few years afterwards that it had been Carter's ill-prepared answers and general unfamiliarity with even the most basic concerns of conservative evangelicals that marked a "turning point" in American religious history and convinced those gathered that "they must increase their efforts to influence the political decisions of our country."²

Premillennialism Complicates Evangelical Politics

While Balmer characterizes what would become the known as the "Moral Majority" as a movement that had already closed ranks and set its agenda prior to Carter's breakfast, conservative evangelicalism would not settle on a candidate for months to come and would remain a politically fractious group for at least another decade. The Moral Majority was not even the only group attempting to represent conservative evangelicals in national politics at this time. Another organization, Christian Voice, was founded in 1978 by Robert Gordon Grant as a coalition of various pro-family, anti-gay (including Grant's other organization American Christian Cause), and anti-pornography groups. Christian Voice initially overshadowed the Moral Majority (headed by Falwell)—attracting significant financial support from Pentecostal leader and televangelist Pat Robertson as well as several members of Congress who served on its "Congressional advisory committee." Hal Lindsey would also lend early credibility to the group, producing a series of "Doomsday Reports" which framed political developments in terms of their potential prophetic significance. As the more ecumenical organization

² Balmer, *Redeemer*, 122-125; Tim LaHaye, *The Race for the 21st Century* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1986), 96.

eager to partner with conservative Catholics and Jews, it was Christian Voice which drew the support of free market think tanks like the Heritage Foundation and served as the testing ground for new political tactics like Richard Viguerie's mailing list technique and the dissemination through church networks of "moral report cards" for candidates. By 1980 the organization claimed nearly 200,000 donors.³ However, while the potential conservative coalition Christian Voice's ecumenicism made possible was immensely appealing to libertarian and free-market political strategists, it would be the more narrowly evangelical mission of the Moral Majority which would lead to it surpassing Christian Voice by the mid-1980s.

Notably absent from the political agenda of the Moral Majority—which included school prayer, anti-abortion, anti-homosexual, and anti-ERA legislation as well as opposition to both communism and secular humanism—were policy positions derived specifically from the leadership's general premillennialism. While most of the organization's leaders affirmed premillennialism, the most well-known figures in prophecy circles were noticeably absent. Those, like Kirban, with large grassroots ministries never received invitations while those like Graham with established international ministries declined to participate. Those who did participate typically checked their premillennialism at the doors of political conventions. As historian Timothy Weber (himself an active evangelical) wrote in *Eternity* as the movement was coalescing, its leader Jerry Falwell "does not make his premillennialism explicit in his political views...He does not seek to usher in the future millennium; he wants to put America back

³ Sarah Diamond, *Not By Politics Alone: The Enduring Influence of the Christian Right* (New York, NY: Guilford Press, 2000), 68-69.

the way he thinks it was.”⁴ In fact, as an eschatology which had long decried nationalism and held the conviction that *every* human system would be judged, most religious observers saw premillennialism as an outright hindrance to partisan political activism. From their earliest reports, evangelical observers took immediate notice of the movement’s “more optimistic, more activist, and more cooperative” attitude in contrast with the more reserved premillennial posture of the “Old Right” which had typically avoided partisan politics.⁵

Reconstructionists also took note of the apparent conflict between premillennialism and partisanship, with Gary North labeling it “intellectual schizophrenia” and Kenneth L. Gentry calling it the “blessedness of inconsistency.”⁶ While historians have typically noted the significance of Ronald Reagan’s overtures to evangelicals at the National Affairs Briefing Conference that August in Dallas, Texas, (famously telling the crowd, “You can’t endorse me...but I endorse you”) equally significant was the fact that premillennial evangelicals were receptive to such wooing in

⁴ Timothy P. Weber, “The Great Second Coming Alert,” *Eternity* 32, no. 4 (April, 1981), 22; The one major exception to this was Tim LaHaye, who served on Jerry Falwell’s earliest board of directors. However, as discussed in the next chapter, LaHaye’s lifelong promotion of premillennialism carried with it deep Reconstructionist undercurrents. As LaHaye would reveal a few years later, he viewed premillennialism as an effective evangelistic tool but not something which informed his otherwise postmillennial politics. The other prophetically-minded member of the Moral Majority, Pat Robertson, would maintain a tumultuous relationship with the group. Robertson had been a speaker at the National Affairs Briefing and used his allotted time to preach against pollution and the exploitation of the Creation.

⁵ Edward E. Plowman, “Is Morality All Right?” *Christianity Today* 23, no. 25 (November 2, 1979), 81.

⁶ Gary North, “The Intellectual Schizophrenia of the New Christian Right,” in James B. Jordan, ed., *Symposium on the Failure of the American Baptist Culture* (Tyler, TX: Geneva Divinity School, 1982), 1; Kenneth L. Gentry, “The Blessedness of Inconsistency,” *Dispensationalism in Transition* 8, no. 6 (July, 1994), 1.

the first place.⁷ Reconstructionists pointed to Falwell who, prior to forming the Moral Majority, had openly preached that faithful Christians would avoid the “monkey business” of politics and focus on evangelism in the time that remained before Christ returned. North, in particular, was pleased to see the Affairs Briefing and Reagan’s open arms as a “watershed” moment which brought “thousands of American fundamentalists into the American political mainstream” given that, even though they were often unaware of it, these evangelicals were already carrying with them several Reconstructionist-formulated ideas:

The fundamentalists have picked up the phrase, "secular humanism." They do not know where they found it. It comes from Rushdoony's writings throughout the 1960's. Rushdoony influenced lawyer John Whitehead, who helped popularize it in a new widely quoted article by Whitehead and former Congressman John Conlan.⁸

Ultimately, these Reconstructionists considered partisan premillennialism to function as “operational postmillennialism” and observed that while it might be a case of “theological schizophrenia,” it was a “welcome affliction that is far preferable to the more consistent retreatism of 1870-1979.”⁹ Still, they recognized that those who integrated premillennialism—especially its dispensational strand—into their politics would never be

⁷ As with the “Washington for Jesus” rally, Carter had also been invited to speak to the evangelical audience in Dallas and declined. The result, in the words of North who was in attendance, was that the conference became “a kind of political rally for Ronald Reagan.” North, “The Intellectual Schizophrenia of the New Christian Right,” 1.

⁸ North, “The Intellectual Schizophrenia of the New Christian Right,” 1-2, 14; John W. Whitehead and John Conlan, “The Establishment of the Religion of Secular Humanism and Its First Amendment Implications,” *Texas Tech Law Review* 10, no. 1 (1978):1-66.

⁹ Kenneth L. Gentry, “The Greatness of the Great Commission,” *Journal of Christian Reconstruction* 7, no. 2 (Winter, 1981), 34.

fully compatible with the Reconstructionist vision of postmillennial theonomy and they would spend the next decade aggressively working to both steer the evangelical mainstream and drive premillennialism to extinction.

Such eschatological inconsistencies help to explain, in part, why the Moral Majority and its partisanship was not universally well-received by conservative evangelicals. Explicitly premillennial publications were some of the most skeptical when it came to evaluating the true power and influence of the Moral Majority. As *Eternity* wrote, Reagan's victory was due more to voters' frustrations over inflation and unemployment than the efforts of the "so-called 'New Christian Right' and the TV evangelists who worked so hard for his election." They pointed to the 1982 midterms as that such politically-organized evangelicals still lacked the clout they claimed. In spite of claims by the Moral Majority to the contrary, they reminded readers that evangelicals "still do not speak with one voice."¹⁰ Some, like the Adventist paper *Ministry*, went so far as to claim that such evangelical political organizations *were the fulfillment of Satanic prophecies*—likening the movement's leaders to the Great Whore of Babylon sipping from a golden cup and "dreaming godlike dreams...'*Lord, aren't You glad! In Your name have we rewritten the Constitution!*'"¹¹ Salem Kirban agreed. His 1981 book *The Tragedy of Christians in Politics* laid out the prophetic case that the Moral Majority was in fact

¹⁰ Richard V. Pierard, "The Great Eclipse," *Eternity* 35, no. 2 (February, 1984), 19.

¹¹ Rolan R. Hegstad, "Down The Road To A Christian Republic," *Ministry* (December, 1979), 5.

paving the way for the Antichrist.¹² A few concerned voices still maintained hope that evangelicals might bring their unique perspective to bear on matters of ecology. Oregon senator Mark Hatfield (a Baptist who kept his eschatology relatively private) encouraged the nascent Moral Majority to be mindful of Creation's limits and not assume that economic growth could progress infinitely. He cautioned against promoting the pernicious idea that God would bless the "exploitation of his world when it is done in the name of making the nation stronger and more prosperous." The Church, he wrote, has been guilty of sanctioning such economic thoughts "as if they were theological truths."¹³

Had the Moral Majority heeded Hatfield's advice and sought to craft its own evangelical approach to environmentalism in the 1980s, it would have found eager partners in conservative denominations like the Southern Baptist Convention. The SBC saw an outburst of environmental concern in 1980 and 1981, beginning with Baylor professor of Christian ethics Daniel McGee identifying the crisis (along with world hunger and the arms race) as one of the denomination's areas of "special moral concern" for the upcoming decade. Pollution now "threatens the existence of life" he wrote and evangelicals had "a very clear responsibility to recover the full meaning of the doctrine of

¹² Salem Kirban, *The Tragedy of Christians in Politics* (Huntingdon Valley, PA: Salem Kirban, Inc., 1981).

¹³ Mark O. Hatfield, "Finding The Energy To Continue," *Christianity Today* 24, no. 3 (February 8, 1980), 22; Even secular observers were quick to note how hesitant evangelicalism was to accept the Moral Majority, with *Publishers Weekly* writing that most of the books featured at the 1981 Christian Booksellers Association conference appeared to exhibit a "questioning rather than accepting attitude about the Moral Majority." "The Moral Majority in the CBA Market," *Publishers Weekly* (August 21, 1981), 30-31.

stewardship and communicate that meaning clearly.”¹⁴ Southern Baptists were receptive to McGee’s charge, with one denominational writer agreeing that any lifestyle that destroys the environment is a “sub-Christian lifestyle.”¹⁵ Henlee Barnette, the eccentric and activist professor of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, encouraged his fellow Baptists to expand their understanding of stewardship beyond economics to “the totality of man’s existence and environment.” Echoing Schaeffer and other premillennialists, Barnette cited Paul Ehrlich and offered practical steps for churches to take the lead in modeling ecological behavior.¹⁶ The SBC’s hope that the emerging Religious Right might take stewardship seriously was short-lived. By March of 1981, the director of the denomination’s Christian Life Commission, William Elder, could see the writing on the wall: “On the environmental front it looks like conservation and ecology interests can hope for little more than lip service. As a corollary, all sorts of deregulation are likely to follow.” Elder minced no words in telling Baptists how they should respond, writing that “Christians need to stand firmly against this abandonment of the public interest.”¹⁷

Ronald Reagan and James Watt Complicate Premillennialism

For all of the support that Reagan would eventually receive from premillennial evangelicals, such End Times beliefs would prove at times to be quite a distraction for his

¹⁴ Daniel B. McGee, “Perspectives on the Eighties,” *Light* (February-March, 1980), 6-7.

¹⁵ W. David Sapp, “A Responsible, Simple, Christian Lifestyle,” *Light* (November, 1981), 3.

¹⁶ Henlee Barnette, “Stewardship of the Environment,” *Light* (October-November, 1980), 5-6.

¹⁷ William H. Elder III, “The New Right, 1981,” *Light* (March, 1981), 6.

administration. Reagan's political opponents were quick to latch on to statements by Secretary of Defense Caspar Weinberger who told reporters that he had read the Book of Revelation and did believe that someday the world would end via an "act of God."¹⁸ Eyebrows went up when it became known that Reagan's Surgeon General, Everett Koop, had attended the 1971 Jerusalem Conference on Biblical Prophecy and reported on it for a leading premillennial publication.¹⁹ Opponents were especially eager to leverage Reagan's close ties to conservative evangelicals as proof that he shared (to some degree) their eschatology—especially after using the apocalyptic language of the "evil empire" to describe the Soviet Union and openly discussing his interest in books like Lindsey's *The Late Great Planet Earth*. Fears that Reagan might use his nuclear authority to eagerly kick off Armageddon reached a fever pitch on the eve of his reelection. Sponsored by the Christic Institute, one hundred U.S. clergy signed a petition demanding that Reagan denounced premillennialism and assure the world that such theology would in no way influence his decisions regarding nuclear weapons and their possible use. The Christic Institute then released a 90-minute audio documentary titled "Ronald Reagan and the Prophecy of Armageddon" featuring many of those theologians condemning dispensationalism and any influence it might have over the President.²⁰ The issue

¹⁸ Robert Sheer, *With Enough Shovels: Reagan, Bush, and Nuclear War* (New York, NY: Random House, 1982), xi.

¹⁹ Everett Koop, "Prophecy Conference Meets in Jerusalem," *Eternity* 22, no. 8 (August, 1971), 25.

²⁰ Joe Cuomo, "Ronald Reagan and the Prophecy of Armageddon," *Christic Institute* (October, 1984).

received substantial press coverage in the months leading up to the election with papers New York Times publishing detailed explanations of dispensationalism and quoting Christic Institute research director Andrew Lang who warned that “nuclear dispensationalists” were rapidly assuming control over the Republican Party.²¹

Evangelicals were highly aware of the End Times accusations and conspiracies promoted by groups like the Christic Institute. *Christianity Today* called the petition “more of a preelection sideshow than a serious theological debate,” noting that the secular press seemed to enjoy running sensationalist stories focused on tribulation beliefs. In the eyes of the editors, it was debatable whether Reagan even realized that he using premillennial terminology. For their part, they also criticized Lindsey for his seemingly “flippant” approach to nuclear Armageddon—going so far as to say that despite his best-sellers he was “not taken seriously even at his alma mater, Dallas Theological Seminary.” Their report concluded with John Walvoord, Sr., declaring that “to accuse Reagan of nuclear dispensationalism is totally unjustified...[he] has no theological mooring to that sort of teaching. Dispensationalism has to do with the stewardship of life and has nothing to do with nuclear war.”²² For his part, Lindsey had been asked directly, years before Reagan’s first election, what he imagined a presidency based on his dispensational premillennialism would look like. In a 1977 interview with *Eternity* magazine, Lindsey

²¹ Marjorie Hyer, “Armageddon,” *Washington Post* (October 24, 1984), <https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/politics/1984/10/24/armageddon/8b364a1c-fadc-41e1-b2d1-b262aa08eb46/>; John Herbers, “Religious Leaders Tell of Worry On Armageddon View Ascribed to Reagan,” *New York Times* (October 21, 1984), 32.

²² “Critics Fear That Reagan Is Swayed By Those Who Believe In A ‘Nuclear Armageddon,’” *Christianity Today* 28, no. 18 (December 14, 1984), 48, 51.

was initially surprised to be asked such a question but after some thought concluded that they would likely “support Israel’s survival” and “keep America’s military strong.” However, he said that arriving at such foreign policy stances did not require his particular interpretation of the Bible and openly wondered how useful such prophecies would be to an American leader given that “from the stand point of prophecy...the United States will become a second-rate power.”²³ He certainly did not imagine that a future President like Reagan would find much in the prophecies of Daniel and Revelation to support their Cold War bravado.

The most enduring End Times controversy of the Reagan’s tenure, however, would come in his first year of his administration and see his Secretary of the Interior, James Watt, caught in the eye of the storm. The maelstrom that would quickly grow into “the most bitter public clash between end times fundamentalists and the environmental community” according to historian Robert Fowler began on February 5, 1981, in an otherwise unremarkable congressional oversight hearing before the Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs.²⁴ After hours of questioning, congressional representative James Weaver of Oregon asked Watt—in light of Reagan’s deregulatory agenda—what he thought about the need to conserve “basic resources for our children.” Watt affirmed that he took such matters seriously:

²³ Stephen Board and Hal Lindsey, “The Great Cosmic Countdown: Hal Lindsey on the Future,” *Eternity* 28, no. 1 (January, 1977), 21.

²⁴ Robert Booth Fowler, *The Greening of Protestant Thought* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1995), 47.

That is the delicate balance the Secretary of the Interior must have, to be steward for the natural resources for this generation as well as future generations. I do not know how many future generations we can count on before the Lord returns. Whatever it is we have to manage with a skill to leave the resources needed for future generations.²⁵

In order to understand the mood of this exchange, it is important to note the conversation which followed Watt's statement and which concluded the hearing. More amused than perturbed, Weaver requested permission from the chairman to ask Watt a further question on Christianity and natural resources. Permission granted, the Oregonian then relayed a letter from a constituent who asked why, if God wanted humans to preserve forests as He created them, did He send His Son as a carpenter? Watt admitted to being stumped at first, until an aide pointed out that Christ left His carpentry work and spent forty days in the wilderness before beginning His ministry. As Watt's wife Leilani would recall shortly after: "Everyone at the hearing laughed at the joke...in no way did anyone at the hearing interpret James' comment as a personal mandate to ruin the environment."²⁶

Leilani Watt's account appears credible given that it would not be until weeks later that her husband's words would publicly resurface—stripped of its context—in a political cartoon illustrated by one Reagan's fiercest critics. Illustrator Herb Block (better known by his pen name "Herblock") published a cartoon bearing the title "Onward,

²⁵ United States and James G. Watt, *Briefing by the Secretary of the Interior: Oversight Hearing Before the Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs, House of Representatives; Ninety-Seventh Congress, First Session; on Briefing by the Secretary of the Interior; Hearing Held in Washington, D.C.; February 5, 1981* (Washington D. C.: Government Printing Office, 1981).

²⁶ Leilani Watt, *Caught In The Conflict: My Life With James Watt* (Eugene, OR: Harvest House, 1984), 98-102.

Christian Soldier!” and depicting a buck-toothed Watt leading a bulldozer while carrying a sign that read “WHY SAVE IT? THE END IS NEAR.”²⁷ It would be the opening salvo in a series of political attacks that has continued up to the present. A month after Block’s cartoon appeared, Watt again stood before the congressional committee and again Weaver return to the subject of religion. This time however, it was with a markedly hostile tone that he demanded to know if Watt was “approaching the environmental issue of surface mining [with] ‘Why worry, the Lord’s return is imminent?’” Watt responded that such mining policies had been passed prior to his appointment and that he preferred to work in cooperation with “the environmentalist groups, with the companies, and with the governors of the States” whenever possible. Still Weaver continued to press, asking Watt if his agenda to “gut these laws by changing the regulations” was motivated by a belief in the imminent return of Christ. After a heated back-and-forth, Watt excoriated Weaver for his about-face given that their initial exchange had been congenial and even afterwards “in private conversations with the chairman we have discussed this thoroughly.”²⁸

Despite Watt’s insistence, the discussion of his faith in relation to his position as Secretary of the Interior was now very much public. By May, journalists, political opponents, and environmental journals had seized on Watt’s comments as proof that, as

²⁷ Herb Block, “Onward, Christian Soldier!” (1981); Block’s cartoon so upset Watt’s wife that she recorded her prayer that day in her diary, writing to God: “Your creation gives us beauty and resources. Your own Word teaches stewardship. Don’t let him be distracted by these outrageous lies...I’ve seen him deal with attacks on his policies, but how can he answer the attacks on his faith?” Leilani Watt, *Caught In The Conflict: My Life With James Watt* (Eugene, OR: Harvest House, 1984), 99.

²⁸ Watt, *Caught In The Conflict*, 99-102.

the Wilderness Society cried, an apocalyptic “zealot” was now in charge of the nation’s natural resources. Phillip Burton, a Democratic Representative from California, publicly declared Watt’s beliefs to be the “an environmentalist’s nightmare come to life.” The *Washington Post* declared that American parks and wilderness were “now under divine mandate to be bulldozed, leveled, drilled, mined and leased down to the last holy square yard.” Even the esteemed historian of evangelicalism, George Marsden, penned an article criticizing Watt’s understanding of eschatology, which Marsden felt he was using for political convenience to pass deregulatory economic policies.²⁹ Still, the most caustic attacks on Watt would come from the major secular environmentalist organizations who, in the view of historian David Larsen, went far beyond White’s original critique of Christianity and felt justified on the basis of Watt’s testimony to “single out those with ‘a very literal interpretation of Scripture’ as being especially culpable for environmental degradation.”³⁰

²⁹ Robert Ajemian, “Zealous Lord of a Vast Domain.” *Time* 117, no. 13 (March 30, 1981): 27; Constance Holden, “Public’s Fear of Watt Is Environmentalists’ Gain,” *Science* 212, no. 4493 (April 24, 1981), 422; Colman McCarthy, “James Watt & The Puritan Ethic,” *Washington Post* (May 24, 1981); George Marsden, “Lord of the Interior,” *The Reformed Journal* 31, no 6 (June, 1981), 2-3.

³⁰ David Kenneth Larsen, “God’s Gardeners: American Protestant Evangelicals Confront Environmentalism, 1967-2000,” (Ph.D. diss., University of Chicago, 2001), 170.

The End-Times Apathy Hypothesis Goes Mainstream

While it is doubtful that leaders of the “Group of Ten”³¹ had ever read Richard Hanson’s *The Future of the Great Planet Earth*, the publications of these leading environmental organizations quickly took up his End Times Apathy Hypothesis. Interpreting Watt’s testimony from such a perspective, they quickly brought the idea that conservative evangelicals were hellbent on reaching heaven and were willing to destroy the planet to get there to a wide audience. Even academics were quick to note that Watt had become the “bane of the Sierra Club and the National Audubon Society,” and these groups were eager to go on the offensive.³² By May of 1981, the Audubon Society was warning its members that Watt was “steeped” in an apocalyptic tradition that justified wanton exploitation and that such beliefs were not peripheral to his politics but formed “the core of his life and values.” Peter Steinhart continued this line of attack a few months later, writing that “fundamentalists” like Watt, even when they spoke of stewardship, interpreted it as only a temporary duty in light of the approaching End

³¹ The “Group of Ten” consisted of those major environmental organizations who agreed to form a political alliance in opposition of Reagan’s stated deregulatory agenda. Its informal membership included the Kendall Foundation, the Sierra Club, the National Audubon Society, the National Resource Defense Council, Friends of the Earth, the Environmental Policy Institute, the Izaak Walton League, the Wilderness Society, the Environmental Defense Fund, and the National Wildlife Federation.

³² Susan Power Bratton, “The Ecotheology of James Watt,” *Environmental Ethics* 5, no. 3 (Fall, 1983), 225.

Times and one which could be easily cast aside.³³ Such an argument was made all the more persuasive by the truncation of Watt's quote in the popular press—typically printing only his “I do not know how many future generations we can count on before the Lord returns” statement and excluding any mention of balance and stewardship. David Helvarg of the Sierra Club, in a book that would later inform environmental history textbooks, included only Watt's shortened quote—calling him an “early example of the Christian Right” and casting broad swaths of evangelicalism in an anti-environmental light on the basis of a perceived apocalyptic connection.³⁴

This abbreviated version of Watt's testimony made it easy for non-evangelical observers to assume a link between Watt's anti-environmentalism and the dispensational premillennialism that had become well-known in years following the success of prophecy popularizers like Lindsey. Such an assumed connection has endured now for decades. In 1986, journalist Grace Halsell pointed to Watt as “a clear example of a dispensationalist

³³ Ron Wolf, “God, James Watt, and the Public's Land,” *Audubon* 83, no. 3 (May, 1981), 65; Peter Steinhart, “Fundamentals,” *Audubon* 83, no. 5 (September, 1981), 14; In addition to these secular accounts of the End Times Apathy Hypothesis, religious commentators used the Watts controversy to renew many of the criticism formulated by Richard Hanson in the early 1970s. Zachary Hayes, a Franciscan, was deeply concerned with the popularity of the “books of Hal Lindsey” and begged readers to “distinguish serious Christian eschatology from this sort of literature.” Zachary Hayes, *What Are They Saying About The End of The World?* (New York, NY: Paulist Press, 1983), 20; For their part, evangelicals had considered the possibility of Christ not returning in the near future as precisely the reason why conservation was vitally important. As Dr. Virgil H. Freed, a committed evangelical and director of the Environmental Sciences Center at Oregon State University, told *Christianity Today*: “We must not only solve the problem of what to do with our wastes, but I believe we must do it in a way that will conserve our resources. If the Lord tarries, we may run out of some of our mineral resources in this country before the end of the century.” Stanley C. Baldwin, “Some Answers to Pollution,” *Christianity Today* 61, no. 6 (June, 1970), 26.

³⁴ David Helvarg, *The War Against the Greens: The “Wise-Use” Movement, the New Right, and Anti-Environmental Violence* (San Francisco, CA: Sierra Club Books, 1994), 69.

view of Planet Earth.” In a bibliographic survey of Christianity’s response to the environmental crisis, Joseph Kenneth Sheldon (himself a Christian librarian) included Watt under the heading of “End-Times (Dispensational) Theologies.” Even trained religious and environmental historians such as Paul Boyer and Carolyn Merchant included only Watt’s partial testimony when discussing the assumed link between premillennialism and anti-environmentalism. In 2008, environmental ethicist Paul Maltby included Watt in his genealogy of anti-environmental dispensationalists—a designation which continues up to the present.³⁵

The End Times Apathy Hypothesis only intensified with the turn of the millennium, especially when journalist Glenn Scherer of the eco-journal *Grist* added his own twist to Watt’s testimony. In an article titled, “The Godly Must Be Crazy,” Scherer falsely claimed that Watt had declared to Congress: “After the last tree is felled, Christ will come back.” Scherer would repeat the claim in numerous pieces and the apocryphal words quickly found a receptive audience.³⁶ In his acceptance speech for the “Global Environmental Citizenship Award” a few months later, commentator Bill Moyers

³⁵ Grace Halsell, *Prophecy and Politics: Militant Evangelicals on the Road to Nuclear War* (Westport, CT: Lawrence Hill & Company, 1986), 8; Joseph Kenneth Sheldon, *Rediscovery of Creation: A Bibliographic Study of the Church’s Response to the Environmental Crisis* (Metuchen, NJ: American Theological Library Association & Scarecrow Press, 1992), 39-40; Paul Boyer, *When Time Shall Be No More: Prophecy Belief in Modern American Culture* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1992), 141; Carolyn Merchant, *American Environmental History: An Introduction* (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 2002), 199; Paul Maltby, “Fundamentalist Dominion, Postmodern Ecology,” *Ethics and the Environment* 13, no. 2 (Fall, 2008), 120.

³⁶ Glenn Scherer, “The Godly Must Be Crazy,” *Grist* (October 27, 2004), <https://web.archive.org/web/20041115035502/http://www.grist.org/news/maindish/2004/10/27/scherer-christian/index.html>.

repeated Scherer's fiction to the crowd at Harvard Center for Health and the Global Environment. As Moyer claimed, the Bush administration was following in the steps of Reagan and Watt given that it was under the influence of the same "fundamentalists who regard the environment as fuel for the fire that is coming."³⁷ Watt was incensed. In a fiery rebuke brimming with two decades' worth of frustration, he denied any statement to the effect of encouraging the pillaging of Earth to speed Christ return: "I never said it. Never believed it. Never even thought it. I know no Christian who believes or preaches such error...if such a body of belief exists, I would totally reject it, as would all of my friends."³⁸ Moyer in turn offered only a measured apology for the apocryphal quote before retrenching his belief that evangelicals were determined to destroy the Earth in a book-length treatment of his speech. Premillennialism, he repeatedly stressed, had stripped evangelicals of any reason to care for Creation as "people in the grip of such fantasies cannot be expected to worry about the environment."³⁹

Sorting Out Watt's Ecotheology

Yet, was Watt actually a premillennialist—and a dispensationalist one at that?

Watt had always been an active Christian. He had been born a Congregationalist, been

³⁷ Bill Moyers, "'Welcome to Doomsday', March 24, 2005," *Bill Moyers*, February 25, 2005, <https://billmoyers.com/2005/02/25/welcome-to-doomsday-march-24-2005>.

³⁸ James Watt, "The Religious Left's Lies," *Washington Post* (May 21, 2005), <https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/opinions/2005/05/21/the-religious-lefts-lies/c348908f-9c4a-4f73-ac88-603de131a06a/>.

³⁹ Bill Moyers, *Welcome to Doomsday* (New York, NY: New York Review of books, 2006), 29.

active in the Presbyterian church, served as the chairman of the Social Concerns Committee at a Methodist Church, and was attending a Southern Baptist Church when he finally felt the conviction of the Holy Spirit at a Full Gospel Businessmen's meeting in 1964. He emerged from that meeting a "born again" charismatic Christian and soon joined the Assemblies of God church.⁴⁰ As will be discussed later in the chapter, the charismatic and Pentecostal branches of evangelicalism had been experiencing a revival of postmillennial theology since the 1940s and Watt's thinking bears key traces of this eschatology. It should be noted here that, despite the claims of environmentalists, religious historian Susan Bratton, found little evidence that Watt had anything remotely resembling a complex ecotheology—let alone one that was shaping his policy decisions—and instead concluded that most of his views were based on his economic leanings which favored private, rather than federal, control over resources. She described Watt as a charismatic and though she did not specifically explore his eschatology, she did note that his statements lacked "any mention of sin as an ingredient of environmental problems."⁴¹ Sin and the continued dominion by Satan over Creation were dominant themes in

⁴⁰ Watt, *Caught In The Conflict*, 94-95; Ron Arnold, *At the Eye of the Storm: James Watt and the Environmentalists* (Chicago, IL: Regnery Gateway, 1982), 10.

⁴¹ Bratton, "The Ecotheology of James Watt," 229-331, 233; Premillennialists had drawn a connection between environmentalism and piety years earlier, with writers arguing that praise for Creation's beauty must be combined with repentance for its present condition "if piety and life are to remain vitally related." Jack Davis, "The Environmental Context of Piety," *Christianity Today* 18, no. 6 (December 21, 1973), 28.

premillennialists' environmental thinking (which often centered on piety) and the absence of these should call into question the assumed link between Watt and premillennialism.⁴²

Also notably absent from Watt's prolific writings was any mention of that dispensationalist staple: the Rapture. Even when Watt referred to the Earth as "a temporary way station on the road to eternal life," this was not followed by a Lindsey-like anticipation of escaping that way station in the twinkling of an eye. Rather, Watt instead drew attention back to fact that Americans still shared a collective "responsibility for good stewardship" while they remained on Earth.⁴³ Further evidence that Watt had imbibed at least a measure of postmillennialism comes from one of his few early public statements attempting to defend himself when he told an interviewer that "it's been 2,000 years since the last coming of Christ and it may be another 2,000 before the second coming."⁴⁴ David Larsen, after surveying the breadth of evangelical publications across this time, concluded that Watt's views were "atypical of dominant evangelical attitudes"

⁴² In reality, the relationship between conservative evangelicals and environmentalism in the 1980s was represented less by the supposed premillennial apathy falsely attributed to Reagan and Watt and more so by the famous 1980 bet between the cornucopian economist Julian Simon and the Malthusian environmentalist Paul Ehrlich. Simon's arguments against overpopulation and pollution formed the bedrock of Reconstructionist anti-environmentalism while Ehrlich was the most frequently cited expert by ecologically concerned premillennialists. Their decade-long wager on the future of resource scarcity (a wager Simon would win) exemplified the debated going on within evangelicalism and foreshadowed its conclusion as well. For an account of Simon-Ehrlich wager, see Paul Sabin, *The Bet: Paul Ehrlich, Julian Simon, and Our Gamble over Earth's Future* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2013).

⁴³ James Watt, "Ours is the Earth," *Saturday Evening Post* (January-February, 1982), 74-75.

⁴⁴ Watt, *Caught In The Conflict*, 101-102.

and believed him to be someone who tended to “minimize” environmental concern and in the process was “mistaken for an otherworldly apocalypticist.”⁴⁵

Given their own opposition to premillennialism, it is telling that Reconstructionists were quick to declare their affinity for Watt’s approach to resource management and to use his controversy as further proof that “secular” environmentalism was, in fact, a deeply religious movement in its own right. In a series of undated sermons from the early 1980s, Rushdoony preached those environmentalists attacking Watt were the same people “who want the earth to be the subject of idolatry.” Politically, Rushdoony approved of Watt’s desire to return federal holdings which had been claimed for environmental purposes and roll back “the biggest land grab in all of history.” Theologically, he found himself agreeing with Watt’s belief that the “facilities of the earth” are best utilized in establishing “man’s life on a better basis on this earth.” This is not surprising considering that both Watt and Rushdoony had cut their teeth in the same libertarian milieu of western think tanks committed to free enterprise and opposed to federal land holdings. While he did not claim Watt as a Reconstructionist in his own right, Rushdoony did applaud the Secretary of the Interior for “promoting sane policies of conservation” and believed he had been unfairly subjected to a “chorus of hysterical

⁴⁵ Larsen, “God’s Gardeners,” xi, 159; Reconstructionists and other postmillennialists have typically thought of Christ’s return in terms of thousands, if not millions, of years.

criticism” by environmental groups.⁴⁶ Other Reconstructionists came to Watt’s defense, attacking Wolf’s article and an environmentalism which they saw as having an “anti-private ownership bias.” Such environmentalism would bring ruin to society with its pantheistic values as well as “the repudiation, not the establishment, of environmentalist values.” Always quick to attack premillennialism wherever it appeared, Reconstructionists had no such criticisms of Watt and instead saw his small government ethos and emphasis on human dominion over nature as perfectly in line with their views.⁴⁷

Prophecy Popularizers Continue to Promote Environmentalism

The argument that Watt’s environmental stances were representative of premillennialism falls flat given that premillennial prophecy popularizers throughout the 1980s continued to lend their apocalyptic support to the cause of environmentalism. Once again, these premillennialists emphasized that it was not the “Bible wavers” who were promoting doom and gloom, but that it was secular, scientific authorities along with “the media which is waving the black flags.”⁴⁸ Lindsey, as he had done throughout the 1970s,

⁴⁶ Rousas J. Rushdoony, “The Dominion Mandate,” undated sermon; Rousas J. Rushdoony, “Has The Alaskan Pipeline Been A Disaster?” undated sermon; Sounding very much like Rushdoony, Watt had followed up his controversial statements a few weeks later by publicly stating his belief that “elite groups” were increasingly working to “lock away public lands and resources for their own special use.” Bill Stall, “Watt Raps ‘Elite Groups’ in Environmental Movement,” *Los Angeles Times* (March 24, 1981).

⁴⁷ Ruben C. Alvarado, “Environmentalism and Christianity’s Ethic of Dominion,” *Journal of Christian Reconstruction* 11, no. 2 (1986-87), 207-208.

⁴⁸ John Wesley White, *The Coming World Dictator* (Minneapolis, MN: Bethany Fellowship, 1981), 87.

continued to list pollution, overpopulation, and famine among the “birth pang” signs that he saw as heralding the End. He warned that, based expert reports, humanity would unlikely be able to feed its population by 2000, especially given the effects of “industrial pollution” on soil, air, and water. Increasing pollution meant, according to scientists, that even where food could be grown, it contained less and less nutrition.⁴⁹ Televangelist Jack Van Impe agreed, citing ecologist Paul Ehrlich’s prediction “there will be no life left on earth by the year 2000 because of pollution and overpopulation.”⁵⁰ Another televangelist, Jimmy Swaggart, also accepted the warnings of leading scientists. As premillennialists had done since the close of WWII, he argued that no thinking person could be “blamed for having a pessimistic attitude” about present conditions. These conditions included not only atomic and bacteriological threats from enemies, but “unmanageable” population growth, exhausted fossil fuel reserves, toxic pollution, acid rain, and an unstable climate threatening to tilt toward either a new Ice Age or a runaway greenhouse effect “cooking us all like a mess of crawfish in a pot on the stove.”⁵¹ Lindsey included acid rain, along with “wide-spread changing weather patterns,” as threats to food production while Graham speculated that the “plagues” predicted by Revelation might be fulfilled via “the

⁴⁹ Hal Lindsey, *The 1980's: Countdown to Armageddon* (New York, NY: Bantam Books, 1980), 26-28.

⁵⁰ Jack Van Impe, *11:59...And Counting!* (Troy, MI: Jack Van Impe Ministries, 1983), 87; Billy Graham readily admitted to not having a solution to the issue of overpopulation but told readers that Christians should “work with all our ingenuity to alleviate the population problems that lead to hunger and premature death.” Billy Graham, *Approaching Hoofbeats: The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse* (Waco, TX: Word Books, 1983), 174.

⁵¹ Jimmy Swaggart, *Armageddon: The Future of Planet Earth* (Baton Rouge, LA: Jimmy Swaggart Ministries, 1987), 181-183.

shifting climate patterns throughout the world” and warned that the phenomenon might produce “what serious meteorologists are calling ‘little ice age number two.’”⁵²

Still, even in the midst of such ecological despair, these writers held out hope for a world renewed. For Edith Schaeffer, nature would be restored and the “terrible vandalization of God’s creation” cease with the return of Christ.⁵³ In particular, Van Impe looked forward to drinking from the River of Life in Revelation 22 for which “chemically treated water is no longer necessary, for pollution has become nonexistent!”⁵⁴ James McKeever suspected that there would be “no factories or automobiles” on the renewed Earth as God would have destroyed everything that pollutes the environment.⁵⁵

The link between ecology and premillennial eschatology was so well-established by the 1980s that even when authors *did not* draw ties between the prophecy and environmental predictions, publishers *still* promoted titles as if they did. Charles C. Ryrie’s *The Final Countdown* is a straightforward account of systematic theology that makes no effort to connect the Bible to recent headlines. This, however, did not stop the publisher from advertising the book with a dramatic flourish: “Overpopulation will kill us all...Pollution will soon make our world uninhabitable...Worldwide famine and mass

⁵² Lindsey, *The 1980’s*, 28-29; Graham, *Approaching Hoofbeats*, 193.

⁵³ Edith Schaeffer, *Lifelines: The Ten Commandments For Today* (Westchester, IL: Crossway Books, 1982), 158.

⁵⁴ Jack Van Impe, *Revelation Revealed: A Verse-By-Verse Study* (Dallas, TX: Word Publishing, 1982), 259.

⁵⁵ James McKeever, *The Coming Climax of History* (Medford, OR: Omega Press, 1982), 162.

starvation are inevitable...But the Bible teaches that the end is not yet.”⁵⁶ One can only imagine the confusion of readers who finished the book without ever encountering such topics.

In contrast to Ryrie, premillennial newcomer Mike Evans made the environmental crisis the central thesis of his book *The Return*. Evan’s book began with a fictional account of a near-future world in which a scientist delivers the latest projections from a supercomputer which conclude that there is no way avoid disaster regarding “environmental and world energy concerns.”⁵⁷ In this near-future, the environmental effects of the arms race have been pollution, deforestation, and “incredible depletion of the earth’s nonrenewable resources.” The overuse of chemical pesticides has created hundreds of “superbugs” which defy control.⁵⁸ Dropping the fictional preview, he moved to discuss the present conditions of the 1980s. In light of deteriorating environmental conditions he wrote, the prophecies of the Bible stand out “like enormous billboards” warning that the end might be near. He described the poison gas leak at the Union Carbide plant in Bhopal, India, which left thousands dead in 1984 as “a grotesque symbol of the way we are destroying ourselves.”⁵⁹ He praised the EPA for banning herbicides containing dioxin and mourned the harm the chemical wrought in places like Love Canal,

⁵⁶ Charles C. Ryrie, *The Final Countdown*, second edition (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1983), front matter.

⁵⁷ Mike Evans, *The Return* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 1986), 9-10.

⁵⁸ Evans, *The Return*, 12, 14.

⁵⁹ Evans, *The Return*, 41.

New York, and Times Beach, Missouri.⁶⁰ He warned of European forests killed off by acid rain, the dying Baltic Sea, and the cautionary tale of the village of Knapsack in Germany which had been declared “unfit for human habitation because of air pollution” in 1972.⁶¹

In particular, Evans took the growing threat of climate change seriously. Not only were manmade pollutants stripping away the protective ozone layer, but carbon dioxide was intensifying the greenhouse effect:

What we are seeing is a steady global increase in temperature. Because of the burning of so much fossil fuel, we are beginning a trend which will increase the temperature of the earth. As the summers get hotter, the amount of ice melting increases the levels of the oceans and lakes. If we melt our arctic and antarctic ice caps, we are going to see the water levels rise all over planet Earth. You might see Houston under water...It is not an accident that we are seeing an increase in the deserts of every continent on the earth. We have so modified the weather patterns of the world that you cannot predict the weather for the future based on previous years. We are flying blind.⁶²

Such a rapidly changing climate threatened not only farming, but the “whole friendly environment of the world as it exists now.”⁶³

Evans even went so far as to adopt the voice of an Old Testament prophet in rebuking both capitalism and the American way of life for harming the poor and the

⁶⁰ Evans, *The Return*, 43.

⁶¹ Evans, *The Return*, 47, 57.

⁶² Evans, *The Return*, 47.

⁶³ Evans, *The Return*, 56.

environment. According to Evans, famine and hunger had less to do with overpopulation than with wealth inequality, observing that the poor *must* have many children if they hope to be supported in their old age given the lack of social programs. Thus the “scandalous truth” of famine was that it could be “attributed almost entirely to the greed of man” and that such capitalist greed makes it obvious how “as anti-God philosophy like Communism can grip the minds and souls of over one billion people almost overnight.” In fact, he contends that the outcry over population comes mostly from the rich who “are alarmed that the expansion of the numbers of poor and racially different people will face an alteration in the distribution of wealth from that which prevails now.” The accumulated wealth on Americans in turn led them to become the world’s largest contributor to pollution, burning more gasoline than the rest of the world combined and exposing their children’s brain to the toxic effects of lead.⁶⁴ Above all, Evans did not want his book to leave readers passive or fatalistic, concluding with a call to action: “My purpose is to alarm and to awaken you to the possibility of a whole new life.”⁶⁵

The strongest premillennial statements in defense of ecology, however, would come straight from “America’s Pastor”—Billy Graham. Graham, in his *Approaching Hoofbeats*, would offer the strongest statements in favor of environmentalism of any premillennialist during the decade. Graham’s most powerful ecological statement:

⁶⁴ Evans, *The Return*, 52-54, 57.

⁶⁵ Evans, *The Return*, 57.

For the past twenty years a rather controversial group of men and women known as ecologists has been warning us about the depletion of the earth's limited resources. They talk about reckless waste, about nuclear and chemical pollutions, about indiscriminate killing of wildlife, about cementing over the forests with freeways and slicing through neighborhoods with on-and-off ramps that feed those ribbons of concrete crisscrossing our country. They warn us about acid rain belching from industrial smokestacks to descend on nature and defoliate God's beautiful creation...They have been the watchmen and watchwomen on the gates warning of the enemy within. They've been ridiculed and threatened, tolerated and lauded. But now with the sound of the fourth horseman's hoofbeats approaching, perhaps it is time we saw them in the light of Genesis and Revelation and took their warnings more seriously.⁶⁶

Graham said that he was “more and more an advocate of the true ecologists” who were preserving green zones in cities and guarding the purity of the nation’s air and water. He thanked them for their work in restoring the once polluted Lake Michigan and Lake Erie, declaring that these environmentalists were the ones truly fulfilling the Dominion Mandate. As a direct result of their environmentalism, he wrote, “the fourth horseman of Revelation has been slowed in his destructive ride.”⁶⁷

In order to aid these ecologists in their work, Graham lobbied in favor of environmental legislation. Waxing tragically poetic about one of his earliest experiences with death, he wrote:

When I was a boy growing up near Charlotte, North Carolina, I remember the creek that ran through the middle of my father's farm. It was a fairly big creek. I loved Sugar Creek; but what should have been a thing of beauty, a swimming hole for hot summer afternoons, a source of nourishment and growth for my father's

⁶⁶ Graham, *Approaching Hoofbeats*, 195.

⁶⁷ Graham, *Approaching Hoofbeats*, 195.

cattle, a deliverer of nutrients to the land, was, instead, a cause for grief, even death. One morning we found a Holstein cow lying dead and swollen on Sugar Creek's polluted bank. A mill upstream somewhere was dumping poison into the stream. Sugar Creek died and carried death wherever it went.⁶⁸

The Graham family's grief was compounded by anger upon discovering that there were "no laws to which my father could appeal to have Sugar Creek cleaned and restore."⁶⁹

Along with legislative responsibility, Graham also demanded that Western consumers and nations fulfill their Christian duties to the poor. The billions spend on cosmetics by Europeans and Americans, he wrote, would mean the difference between life and starvation for those elsewhere in the world. He continued: "I feel even more strongly today about the social responsibility of the rich nations sharing their surpluses with the poor." In Graham's mind, one could not read the Bible and "draw any other conclusion about where our responsibility lies."⁷⁰

Christian Reconstructionism: Schism and Growing Influence

The 1980s would be a decade of both tremendous growth and painful schism as Reconstructionists expanded their influence over evangelicalism and, in the process, smuggled into the movement's mainstream an opposition to environmentalism similar to that which Watt had promoted and which critics had falsely attributed to premillennialism. By 1981, following Reagan's landslide election, the evangelical

⁶⁸ Graham, *Approaching Hoofbeats*, 195-196.

⁶⁹ Graham, *Approaching Hoofbeats*, 195-196.

⁷⁰ Graham, *Approaching Hoofbeats*, 171.

political network was still so underdeveloped that when *Newsweek* surveyed the scene it listed Rushdoony's Chalcedon Foundation as the *only* think tank of the Religious Right. However, the foundation always rejected the notion that it existed to facilitate a "shadowy plan to seize political control" and criticized such pundits for having never seriously read Rushdoony—who wrote of "family before state or church" and spoke "far more about self-government with little mention of political strategy."⁷¹ In fact, Rushdoony's prioritizing of the Family sphere over those of the Church and the State lay at the root of what would become his movement's most traumatic split.

Only a few months after the *Newsweek* article, Christian Reconstructionism's two leaders—Rushdoony and his son-in-law Gary North—had a falling out which would lead to the movement's great schism.⁷² North had already moved his family and his Institute for Christian Economics to Tyler, Texas, by this time (in part due to concerns over California's vulnerability to nuclear attack) and gathered around him the movement's

⁷¹ "Who's Who on the Right," *Newsweek* (February 2, 1981); "Chalcedon as a 'Think Tank for the Self-Governing Christian'," *Chalcedon* (July 29, 2017).

⁷² The split between Rushdoony and North stemmed from a decision by North as editor of the *Journal of Christian Reconstruction*. James B. Jordan had written a paper according the "interpretive maximalism" hermeneutic (an interpretive approach which holds that *every* Old Testament reference points to Christ) and received North's promise that it would be published in the journal. Rushdoony, who believed that some of Jordan's conclusions were heretical and resembled the ritual logic of fertility cults, confronted North and what he considered to be his rash oath to Jordan. North rejected his father-in-law's objections and soon adopted a generally oppositional disposition toward Rushdoony. North's elevation of the Sphere of the Church over that of the Family was due in large part to his desire to contradict Rushdoony and provoke confrontation. Rushdoony, for his part, maintained a lifelong philosophy of refusing to let his opponents dictate his activity and continued to develop and disseminate his views rather than engage in debates.

second generation of disciples.⁷³ These men included Gary DeMar, David Chilton, Ray Sutton, and James B. Jordan—all of whom worshipped at North’s Westminster Presbyterian Church (Jordan and Sutton served as co-pastors) and taught at his Geneva Divinity School. While Rushdoony had written a survivalist guide, *Preparation for the Future*, in the mid-1960s, North’s cohort became obsessed with the issue and, according to McVicar, operated “at the cutting edge...of this survivalist ethos in the United States.”⁷⁴ They believed catastrophic divine judgement was soon to fall upon those nations like the United States who rejected biblical law and it would be the cooperative survivalist networks of the Church sphere which would enable Reconstructionists to endure and eventually seize political power. Thus Rushdoony and North developed fundamentally incompatible visions of theonomy and, from 1981 to Rushdoony’s death in 2001, would never speak again. Rushdoony believed that the sphere of the Family, as God’s chosen vehicle for grassroots societal change, was preeminent over the Church and the State and must be protected from encroachments by either. For the North-led Tyler faction, it was the Church which would ensure the survival of the Family after the

⁷³ Despite leaving Chalcedon and the donor base his father-in-law had cultivated, North was able to self-finance his new venture as by 1979 his newsletter *Remnant Review* had garnered over 20,000 subscribers and provided a revenue stream of over \$1 million per year. Other investments, such as the sale of two cell tower licenses for \$2 million a few years later, provided North with the means to publish on his own terms. Daniel Silliman, “Died: Gary North, Who Saw Austrian Economics in the Bible and Disaster on the Horizon,” *Christianity Today*, March 3, 2022, <https://www.christianitytoday.com/news/2022/march/gary-north-died-reconstruction-economics-ron-paul.html>.

⁷⁴ Michael J. McVicar, *Christian Reconstruction: R. J. Rushdoony and American Religious Conservatism* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2015), 179, 187-189.

destruction of the State.⁷⁵ These young, energetic, and brashly confrontational Reconstructionists would thus seek, by whatever means necessary, to expand their influence over evangelicalism in order to intensify its political activism and ensure that such activism was oriented toward their postmillennial vision of theonomy. One group above all appeared to represent a theological roadblock on their path to building the Kingdom: premillennialists.

Reconstructionists viewed the apparent political achievements of groups like Christian Voice and the Moral Majority as incomplete and potentially dangerous. In 1982 the Tyler faction devoted an entire symposium to outlining their dissatisfaction. They were glad that “fundamentalism and ‘social action’ seem to be making amends,” but could already see that the coalition was showing signs of “crisis, confusion, and indeed impotence.” North was willing to praise the New Christian Right for “some victories”—most notably its development of extensive mailing lists and global satellite television networks (North did not credit them with Reagan’s election)—but maintained that the movement would remain mired in “schizophrenia” and fail to achieve lasting victory so long as it lacked “eschatological dynamism [and] a program of social reconstruction.”

⁷⁵ McVicar, *Christian Reconstruction*, 191-194. These distinct visions help to explain why Rushdoony devoted much of his efforts into protecting and expanding the Christian homeschool movement while North remained more interested in securing political control of public schools and other areas of society. Rushdoony could also speak more openly on capital punishment for transgressing biblical laws on account of him envisioning society as transformed organically through the voluntary conversions of its family units. Parents would be willing to stone a disobedient child not because the State required it, but because they willing sought to be obedient to God’s law. North and his cohort would often seek to distance themselves from Rushdoony’s discussions of reinstating Old Testament punishments given that they sought a more top-down imposition of biblical law.

These dual features of postmillennialism and theonomy were crucial, Reconstructionists argued, because they were the antidote for confronting “the most important myth that needs to be challenged”—a myth held by the New Christian Right itself. Whereas premillennial evangelical leaders believed that dominion of the Earth had been lost to Satan with the Fall, Reconstructionists held that such present dominion belonged to Christ and that “as long as the ‘Religious Right’ believes that man is stronger than God in any area...very little will be accomplished in the long run.”⁷⁶ An opportunity to begin correcting such myths and pivoting evangelicalism away from its pietistic premillennialism toward theonomic postmillennialism would appear soon.

In response to Congress declaring 1983 “Year of the Bible,” Nancy DeMoss (president of the Arthur S. DeMoss Foundation) and Bill Bright (president of Campus Crusade for Christ) created a campaign to publish a book—*Power For Living*—on biblical living and distribute it nationwide. Striking upon the idea in August, time was of the essence. DeMoss and Bright being non-charismatic Presbyterians (as were Reconstructionists—a similarity they were quick to point out), they were familiar with Gary DeMar’s *God and Government* and offered the \$20 million project to the Reconstructionist publishing house American Vision. DeMar, Chilton, and Sutton, writing around the clock, completed the manuscript in a week and by the end of the

⁷⁶ Kevin Craig, “Social Apologetics,” in James B. Jordan, ed., *Symposium on the Failure of the American Baptist Culture* (Tyler, TX: Geneva Divinity School, 1982), 41, 74; James B. Jordan, “Editor’s Introduction,” in James B. Jordan, ed., *Symposium on the Failure of the American Baptist Culture* (Tyler, TX: Geneva Divinity School, 1982), v; North, “The Intellectual Schizophrenia of the New Christian Right,” 39-40.

following month millions of copies were ready to be shipped. Sensing their opportunity to bring postmillennial theonomy into the American mainstream, Reconstructionists candidly referred to *Power For Living* as their “gospel blimp” and its funders as “sugar daddies.”⁷⁷ By October, the book was ready for distribution, but negative early press on the project’s Reconstructionist ties left DeMoss “angered and embarrassed” and she ordered the American Vision copies destroyed. A heavily revised version of *Power For Living*—one which omitted biblical law for seeker-friendly evangelism—appeared in November with authorship credited to charismatic pastor Jamie Buckingham. All ties to American Vision and Reconstructionism were erased from the November edition which remains in print and has been read by millions around the world.⁷⁸

Stung by this rejection, Reconstructionists viewed the *Power For Living* controversy as a clear delineation of where the major intra-evangelical fault lines lay and remained undeterred in their pursuit of steering the broader movement. “Completely unknown to the commercial-watching public,” Chilton would later write, the two editions

⁷⁷ David Chilton, “Between the Covers of *Power For Living*,” *Biblical Economics Today* 7, no. 2 (February-March, 1984), 1.

⁷⁸ Chilton, “Between the Covers of *Power For Living*,” 1; The fact that Buckingham was amenable to their postmillennialism (typically expressed as “Dominion Theology” or “Kingdom Now Theology” in charismatic circles) and certainly no advocate for premillennialism did little to assuage their frustration. Buckingham, despite his eschatology, maintained a sense of pietism similar to the rest of evangelicalism and his edition of *Power For Living* contained none of the biblical law which the Tyler faction had promoted. Buckingham also was someone who disagreed sharply with the Reconstructionists on matters of ecology, warning as early 1980 of the dangers of acid rain and rebuking Americans for failing to listen to scientists. He directly challenged the pro-oil position of Reconstructionists, writing that “maybe the only way God can salvage His earth is to cut off the supply of fuel which is destroying our atmosphere [and] poisoning our lands and seas.” Jamie Buckingham, “Acid Rain,” *Charisma* (March, 1980), 10; Jamie Buckingham, *Power For Living*, revised edition (West Palm Beach, FL: Arthur S. DeMoss Foundation, 1983).

of *Power For Living* were “seemingly identical, but actually in ideological combat with one another.” In writing checks for both, the DeMoss foundation had effectively “subsidized conflicting sides in a theological war over some of the most basic issues of the Christian faith.”⁷⁹ That DeMoss and Bright had turned to a charismatic in Buckingham filled Chilton with hope given that the strongest inroads Reconstructionists had made to that point were among charismatic Pentecostals. Chilton, a former charismatic Pentecostal himself, had watched as an increasing number of his former friends began reading Rushdoony and exploring theonomy. Whereas the older generation of Pentecostals had remained premillennial and pietistic, the younger, more charismatic and eschatologically flexible generation was eager to “apply the Bible to every area of life” and were increasingly falling under the sway of Reconstructionism. In the aftermath of the *Power For Living* disappointment, Reconstructionists took comfort in their increasingly close relationships with New Charismatic organizations like the 700 Club, Maranatha, and New Wine—and their global satellite television networks.⁸⁰

Reconstructionists would continue to intensify their efforts at influencing the charismatic Pentecostal camp and in 1984 their efforts would pay off. Like DeMoss and Bright, the wife of charismatic minister Robert Tilton had been incredibly impressed by DeMar’s *God and Government* and persuaded her husband to invite DeMar’s group of Reconstructionists to speak. A strand of postmillennialism had been revived within

⁷⁹ Chilton, “Between the Covers of *Power For Living*,” 3.

⁸⁰ Chilton, “Between the Covers of *Power For Living*,” 4.

Pentecostalism following a “Latter Rain” revival in 1948 and this eschatological optimism, coupled with the “positive confession” movement, had primed Pentecostals for Reconstructionist ideas. In January of 1984, over a thousand charismatic pastors filled Tilton’s church for an all-day conference featuring the core Reconstructionist thinkers. The response was enthusiastic and soon DeMar was teaching a course on theonomy and the basis for Christian government over Tilton’s satellite network. Soon national charismatic ministries like those of Bishop Earl Paul, Jr. and C. Peter Wagner were beaming a Reconstructionist-style of Dominion Theology from their network satellites.⁸¹

Dispensational prophecy writers were quick to discern the growing alliance between Reconstructionists and charismatic Pentecostals, but the Tyler faction was confident that victory was inevitable. The process whereby Reconstructionists were assuming the mantle of “intellectual shepherds” over the charismatic movement, wrote North in 1986:

...has already begun: bringing together the postmillennial Christian Reconstructionists and the “positive confession” charismatics, with the former providing the footnotes, theology, and political action skills, and the latter providing the money, the audience, and the satellite technology.⁸²

⁸¹ Gary North, *Unholy Spirits: Occultism and New Age Humanism* (Fort Worth, TX: Dominion Press, 1986), 392.

⁸² North was never one to resort to flattery, even when attempting to seal an alliance which he believed was instrumental for bringing forth heaven on Earth. With more bravado than tact, he openly told his dispensationalist opponents that it was charismatics’ “sloppy wording and their lack of systematic study of theology” that left them in need of Reconstructionist leadership. North, *Unholy Spirits*, 392.

By the mid-1980s, Reconstructionists were positively giddy at the prospect of defeating premillennialism and securing a position of influence over the whole of evangelicalism. “Pentecostalism’s infantry is at last being armed with Reconstructionist’s field artillery,” North would cheer.⁸³ He openly bragged that “the day of unchallenged dominance by the old-time dispensational eschatology is about to come to an end” and that “fundamentalism’s escapist religion” would soon be driven to extinction by the “dominion religion of orthodox Christianity.” The key to this power lay with charismatic Pentecostals who, in North’s appraisal, were “about to become Christian Reconstructionists and postmillennialists.”⁸⁴

Creation Science as a Conduit for Postmillennial Environmental Skepticism

While North’s Tyler faction celebrated what appeared to be their impending political victory over premillennialists, Rushdoony’s patient work from Vallecito was continuing to spread Reconstructionism’s presuppositional ideas of science, history, and nature via more grassroots avenues. Spreading through channels like Creation Science and the Christian homeschool movement, Rushdoony’s anti-environmental ideas pushed their roots deeper into the evangelical mainstream. Even as overt Reconstructionist influence over evangelicalism would peak and wane in the early 1990s, these subtle,

⁸³ Gary North, “Reconstructionist Renewal and Charismatic Renewal,” *Christian Reconstruction* 12, no. 3 (May-June, 1988), 2.

⁸⁴ North, *Unholy Spirits*, 393.

presuppositional views have only continued to shape greater and greater numbers of evangelicals' attitudes toward environmentalism and the Creation.

Despite its insistence on being the most faithful and biblically literal interpretation of the Genesis account, Creation Science is a relatively new phenomenon within evangelicalism. Facing the challenge of Darwin's theory, the most literalistic fundamentalists of the late 1800s and early 1900s easily adopted accommodating interpretations such as Gap Theory Creationism and Progressive Creationism. When the Adventist geologist George McCready Price published the first Young Earth Creationism text—*The New Geology*—in 1923, not even the wave of anti-evolutionism that was leading to Dayton earned him anything more than a handful of converts.⁸⁵ It would be four decades before Henry M. Morris and John C. Whitcomb would attempt to publish the next major Young Earth Creationism text—*The Genesis Flood*—in the early 1960s. However, it was specifically on account of their hyper-literalism that Moody Press rejected their manuscript. For Rushdoony, in search of a presuppositional approach to science which began with the biblical text and not evolutionary theory or even the Baconian empiricism of Two Books Theology, *The Genesis Flood* and Young Earth Creationism appeared as a promising vehicle for transmitting the Van Tilian precursors to

⁸⁵ Price's lack of influence was certainly not for a lack of effort. A prolific critic of evolution, he published over a dozen books attacking uniformitarian geology and promoting his version of Young Earth Creationism, including *Illogical Geology: The Weakest Point in the Evolution Theory* (1906), *God's Two Books: Plain Facts about Evolution, Geology, and the Bible* (1911), *The Fundamentals of Geology and their Bearings on the Doctrine of a Literal Creation* (1913), *The Geological-Ages Hoax: A Plea for Logic in Theoretical Geology* (1931), *Genesis Vindicated* (1941), and *Feet of Clay: The Unscientific Nonsense of Historical Geology* (1949). Despite also writing several premillennial commentaries on the books of Daniel and Revelation, Price attracted little attention even from those who shared his eschatology.

Reconstructionist ideas.⁸⁶ As Morris recounted, Rushdoony “was quite enthusiastic about the book and wanted us to get it published in its entirety as soon as possible.” Rushdoony called upon his personal friend Charles Craig of the Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company and urged to consider their work. Although the strictly Calvinist press had never published any kind of work written by premillennialists, it soon became apparent that Morris and Whitcomb shared “an absolute commitment to Biblical inerrancy and authority” with the postmillennial Craig and “got along very well with him.”⁸⁷ Consequently, as a direct result of Rushdoony’s expansive Reconstructionist vision, Young Earth Creationism would launch into the evangelical consciousness.

In the first decades of both movements, Reconstructionism and Young Earth Creationism proved to be mutually constitutive ideologies. In an article original published by the Institute of Creation Research and republished in the *Journal of Christian Reconstruction*, Stuart E. Nevins argued in favor of the biblical model of catastrophism and against any investigative method premised on human reasoning and sensory input given that both are unreliable in their fallen states. He claimed the Apostle Paul was an

⁸⁶ Even after his split with Rushdoony, Gary North still credited his father-in-law with rescuing Whitcomb and Morris’ manuscript at a time when conservatives evangelical leaders “were virtually all opposed to six-day creationism.” North, “The Intellectual Schizophrenia of the New Christian Right,” 3; For a firsthand account of the Reconstructionist argument for presuppositional science, see Charles A. Clough, “Biblical Presuppositions and Historical Geology: A Case Study,” *Journal of Christian Reconstruction* 1, no. 1 (Summer, 1974): 35-48.

⁸⁷ Henry M. Morris, *A History of Modern Creationism* (San Diego, CA: Master Book Publishers, 1984), 154-156, 161; Julie J. Ingersoll, *Building God’s Kingdom: Inside the World of Christian Reconstructionism* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2015), 124.

anti-empiricist when he wrote that believers walked “by faith, not by sight.”⁸⁸ Reconstructionists rejected the Two Books Theology of premillennialists and instead argued that natural revelation was insufficient to guide humans toward salvation. The scientific observation of the Creation revealed only that truth which was “sufficient to condemn them for all eternity.”⁸⁹ In short, Reconstructionists actively worked to develop and promote Young Earth Creationism as they believed it was time evangelicals “stop trying worn-out harmonizations and to start reconstructing the historical sciences.”⁹⁰ Additionally, the budding Young Earth Creation movement was, from its earliest organizations, highly sympathetic to the economic concerns of Reconstructionists. Walter E. Lammerts, the founder of the Creation Research Society, wrote in the *Journal of Christian Reconstruction* that his organization began with the dual aims of “the complete re-evaluation of science from the theistic viewpoint” and the State’s “equally startling... expense and danger to the tax-payer.”⁹¹ Gary North would dedicate his “economic commentary” on the book of Genesis to Morris and Whitcomb, thanking them for their

⁸⁸ Stuart E. Nevins, “Interpreting Earth History,” *Journal of Christian Reconstruction* 1, no. 1 (Summer, 1974), 31-32; II Corinthians 5:7. “Stuart E. Nevins” was a pseudonymous anagram for the article’s real author—Steven Austins.

⁸⁹ Gary North, “Basic Implications of the Six-Day Creation,” *Journal of Christian Reconstruction* 1, no. 1 (Summer, 1974), 9; It took time for Reconstructionism to settle this particular issue as, in the same issue, Greg Bahnsen wrote that Creation was revelational of God and thus those who pursued its scientific investigation “are without excuse if they do not discover their Creator through the study of natural facts.” Greg Bahnsen, “On Worshipping the Creature Rather Than the Creator,” *Journal of Christian Reconstruction* 1, no. 1 (Summer, 1974), 84.

⁹⁰ Clough, “Biblical Presuppositions and Historical Geology,” 35.

⁹¹ Walter E. Lammerts, “The Creationist Movement in the United States: A Personal Account,” *Journal of Christian Reconstruction* 1, no. 1 (Summer, 1974), 57-58.

courage to “challenge the evolutionary presuppositions” and declaring that “without their pioneering work, I could not have written this book.”⁹²

Reconstructionist economics served as an early wedge issue for helping to drive Young Earth Creationists away from the environmental concern that began in the early 1970s. One of the earliest debates over economics and ecology within Young Earth Creationism began within the Creation Research Society’s quarterly journal. In the summer of 1971, John W. Klotz, a Lutheran pastor with a Ph.D. in Genetics, published “Creationism and Our Ecological Crisis” affirming the seriousness of the crisis and the need for an environmental ethic grounded in the doctrine of Creation.⁹³ In response, a young John W. Robbins penned a scathing rebuke of Klutz’s pro-environmental style of creationism. Robbins, at the time just a student working on his political science Ph.D. at Johns Hopkins, was already in the process of establishing his own think tank, the Trinity Foundation, and would go on to serve as Ron Paul’s Chief of Staff from 1981 to 1985. A regular contributor to Reconstructionist publications, he wrote promoting libertarian economics and opposition to the State while also pushing Reconstructionists to soften

⁹² Gary North, *The Dominion Covenant: Genesis: An Economic Commentary on the Bible, Volume I*, revised edition (Tyler, TX: Institute for Christian Economics, 1987), v.

⁹³ John W. Klotz, “Creationism and Our Ecological Crisis,” *Creation Research Society Quarterly* 8, no. 1 (June, 1971), 13-15.

their insistence on absolute theonomy.⁹⁴ As for matters of environmentalism, Robbins considered all forms of ecology to be “obviously a form of nature worship” and accused even Christian environmentalists of harboring a “hatred for man.” As one opposed to State control in any form, he criticized those Christians who appeared more concerned with pollution than the “more ominous and diabolical threat” of communism while also questioning their sanity in crusading on behalf of animal life while ignoring the “slaughter of human beings” carried out by the U.S. government. In his reply, Klotz admitted to being “bewildered” by such accusations. He defended his preference for capitalism as an imperfect system still capable of addressing environmental externalities and noting that few of biologist acquaintances saw themselves as political activists. Where Robbins had pointed to increasing lifespans as proof of ecological vitality, Klotz countered that decreasing infant mortality was the primary cause and that the effects of pollution were more likely to manifest in old age. “What Mr. Robbins refers to as evidence there is no ecology crisis I look on as evidence of God’s mercy,” he wrote. Unfortunately for Klotz, his greatest fear—that an abundance of “dire predictions from well meaning people” with only a limited understanding of ecology will turn out to be

⁹⁴ Robbins was an early economic ally of Reconstructionists before ultimately parting ways over their theonomic demands—though he still maintained a lifelong correspondence with Rushdoony. Robbins would eventually establish the Trinity Foundation for the purpose of monitoring “religious fraud” and regularly sought to expose the financial misdealings of many of the charismatic televangelist ministries that Reconstructionists were allying with in the 1980s. For an example of Robbins agreement with Reconstructionists on matter relating to the State and its economic powers, see John W. Robbins, “The Political Philosophy of the Founding Fathers,” *Journal of Christian Reconstruction* 3, no. 1 (Summer, 1976): 52-68; Robbins intense disagreement with theonomy would provide ammunition to opponents of Reconstructionism as evidenced by his heavily circulated and highly critical review of the Reconstructionist touchstone *By This Standard*. John W. Robbins, “Theonomic Schizophrenia,” *The Trinity Review* (February, 1992), 1-7.

wrong and convince people that environmentalists are crying “wolf”—would come true a few decades later.⁹⁵

For Henry Morris, the Father of Young Earth Creationism, his views on ecology tended to more often reflect those of premillennialists than Reconstructionists—even as his movement was being used to reinforce the scientific presuppositions and economic views aggressively working to undermine such premillennial ecology. Morris credited Dr. Irwin Moon’s *Sermons from Science* series for persuading him of the Bible’s literal truth and he maintained a commitment to premillennialism (almost) all of life.⁹⁶ Morris did differ from other premillennialist whom he believed were “unduly concerned” with the population explosion, estimating that the Earth could sustain a much larger population than many believed and dismissing the issue on account of Christ’s promise to return before humans overran (or destroyed) the planet.⁹⁷ (Overall, Morris was more interested in using the issue as a springboard for attacking evolution, arguing that none of the demographers’ projections could allow for stable populations over the span of millions of years.⁹⁸) However, like many of his fellow premillennialists, Morris believed that those like Lynn White who blamed Christianity for the ecological crisis were “patently absurd.”

⁹⁵ John W. Robbins, “Ecology: The Abolition of Man,” *Creation Research Society Quarterly* 8, no. 4 (March, 1972), 283; John W. Klotz, “A Reply By Dr. Klotz,” *Creation Research Society Quarterly* 8, no. 4 (March, 1972), 284-285, 286-287.

⁹⁶ Henry M. Morris, *The Genesis Record: A Scientific and Devotional Commentary on the Book of Beginnings* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1976), xi.

⁹⁷ Morris, *The Genesis Record*, 76.

⁹⁸ Henry M. Morris, “World Population: Bible vs. Evolution,” *The King’s Business* 61, no. 1 (January, 1970), 18-19.

As he explained, “God’s command was to *keep* the ecology, not to destroy it.”⁹⁹ He was adamant that “pollution of the atmosphere and hydrosphere” represented threats on par with nuclear war and “other fearful things” which Christians ought to address.¹⁰⁰ In response, Morris would stress *Christian* involvement on his belief that the most aggressive environmentalists tended to also “in the vanguard of the new-pagans with their revival of astrology and nature-worship” along with communism¹⁰¹

Most tellingly, it was Morris’s own commentary on the Book of Revelation which led him to his most ecologically-sensitive conclusions. Praised by LaHaye as the most literal interpretation of the Book of Revelation, Morris took care to note that he had written *The Revelation Record* according to a “literalistic, futuristic, sequential, premillennial, pretribulational interpretation of the book.”¹⁰² Such a hermeneutical approach mirrored Lindsey’s “time traveler” theory as Morris emphasized that Revelation was an “actual eye-witness *record* of real events” produced by the author John who was “miraculously translated in time and space.”¹⁰³ Also, like Lindsey, Morris’s study of prophecy produced a deep concern for the growing environmental crisis. As a premillennialist, Morris believed that Satan presently ruled in dominion over the Earth

⁹⁹ Morris, *The Genesis Record*, 93.

¹⁰⁰ Morris, *The Genesis Record*, 229.

¹⁰¹ Henry M. Morris, “Theistic Evolution,” *Creation Research Society Quarterly* 8, no. 4 (March, 1972), 269.

¹⁰² Henry M. Morris, *The Revelation Record: A Scientific and Devotional Commentary on the Prophetic Book of Revelation* (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House, 1983; San Diego, CA: Creation-Life Publishers, 1983), 12, 14. LaHaye even went so far as to predict that Morris’s book would be remembered as the greatest commentary ever written on John’s Revelation.

¹⁰³ Morris, *The Revelation Record*, 209.

(Christ would receive the “title deed” over Creation only at the end of time) and thus had no postmillennial qualms with faulting civilization for its destructive tendencies. Calling attention to prophecy of Revelation 11:18 in which God will “destroy them which destroy the earth,” he condemned humanity’s history of interpreting the Dominion Mandate of Genesis as a license for “despotism and exploitation” rather than stewardship:

But instead, men have all but destroyed the earth. Instead of caring for the animals and plants committed to his dominion, man has become their enemy, and many kinds have been exterminated. Wars have devastated the forests and scorched the lands. Human greed has yielded polluted waters and noxious air. Nutrients have been leached from the soils and lands have been overcultivated and overgrazed. Landscapes have been blighted with open mines and urban slums.”¹⁰⁴

Morris singled out the modern world’s reliance on oil and its resulting effect on the environment. In an incredible bit of theological reasoning, he pointed out that God had not intended for pre-Flood humans to derive energy from the bodies of animals and therefore it should be surprising that “so-called 'fossil fuels' are notoriously inefficient and pollution-generating, for God had certainly not created at least His animals for such purposes.” He further speculated that Revelation 6:6 might refer to the commercial powers of the world exploiting fossil fuels to “indulge their sinful appetites to the fullest.”¹⁰⁵ Turning to Revelation 16:8’s prophesied “scorching” of the Earth by the sun,

¹⁰⁴ Morris, *The Revelation Record*, 108, 116.

¹⁰⁵ Morris, *The Revelation Record*, 116, 209.

Morris devoted several pages to comparing the planetary effects of such a divine judgement with the ongoing reality of climate change due to human activity:

...the intense heat of the sun will also produce another effect which will, at least for a time, somewhat compensate for oceanic evaporation. That is, the great ice sheets of Greenland and the continent of Antarctica will melt. There is enough ice stored in these great reservoirs, it is estimated, to raise the world's sea levels about 200 feet if it were all melted. Such melting is imminent even under present environmental conditions, as the global greenhouse is being augmented by the burning of fossil fuels.¹⁰⁶

Morris even believed that it was possible that Old Testament descriptions in Psalms 147:17-18, Job 38:22-23, and Amos 9:5-6 were cryptic prophecies which, although the writers “had never seen an ice sheet,” described “far-off storehouses of snow which will someday be melted and sent forth by the Lord to cause the waters of the sea to pour out in judgement along the sea coasts of the world.”¹⁰⁷ Ultimately, however, Morris concludes with the promise that the environment will be set right and, in true premillennial fashion, predicts that the New Earth “is not a novel; it is a renewed cosmos.” He assures readers that the Earth will not be annihilated and that nothing of this present world will be lost “except the effects and evidences of sin.”¹⁰⁸

The association of Young Earth Creationism with premillennialism broadly, however, would only come gradually and not as the inevitable outgrowth of either belief.

¹⁰⁶ Morris, *The Revelation Record*, 304.

¹⁰⁷ Morris, *The Revelation Record*, 304-35.

¹⁰⁸ Morris, *The Revelation Record*, 436.

Many early converts to Young Earth Creationism actively sought to defend it against such an association. Two of the most active promoters of the Whitcomb-Morris view were Charles Albert Thompson and Wayne Jackson—credentialed scientists who belonged to the Church of Christ—who frequently denied any link between “pure, biblical creationism” and “any kind of premillennial assumption” in the pages of their *Reason & Revelation* magazine.¹⁰⁹ One of the first steps in this awkward union came in September of 1970 when premillennial prophecy writer Tim LaHaye persuaded Morris to join him in San Diego and assist with the founding of Christian Heritage College (now San Diego Christian College). By 1972 Morris had established the Institute for Creation Research at the college and brought LaHaye into close contact with not only his Young Earth Creationism, but also his presuppositionalism, his conviction that Christians must be active politics, and his personal connections to Rushdoony. Within only a few years, LaHaye would be playing an active role in both Christian Voice and the Moral Majority as well as establishing his own Council for National Policy (a think tank which would briefly include Rushdoony among its board of directors). Eventually, as historian Ronald Numbers notes, Reconstructionists were eventually forced to break fellowship with Whitcomb and Morris specifically over their continued premillennial views. By the end of the 1980s, Reconstructionists like Gary North would be writing *against* many Young Earth Creationism organizations for both their eschatology and their unbiblical reliance on the presuppositions of the Second Law of Thermodynamics in designing their

¹⁰⁹ Wayne Jackson, “Premillennialism and Biblical Creationism,” *Reason & Revelation* 5, (May, 1985).

models.¹¹⁰ As for Morris's fate, despite his close ties to LaHaye, by 1988 North could only offer a rare moment of pity in surveying his career: "He has waged a lifelong defense of six-day creationism, and he has yet to convert a single seminary. He is the odd man out in modern dispensationalism."¹¹¹ Eventually Morris's presuppositional convictions overrode his premillennialism and he spent his last active years promoting a hybrid "dispensational postmillennialism," much to the approval of Reconstructionists.¹¹²

Homeschooling as a Conduit for Postmillennial Environmental Skepticism

Homeschooling was paramount for Rushdoony's vision of the Family sphere and would prove a prime avenue for spreading his anti-environmental views via Young Earth Creationism and other presuppositional approaches. From the beginning of his ministry he had preached that "statist education is anti-familist to the core" and encouraged his follower by telling them "our future will be family oriented, and it will be dominated by

¹¹⁰ Ronald L. Numbers, *The Creationists: The Evolution of Scientific Creationism* (New York, NY: Alfred Knopf, 1992), 315; In 1974, North had criticized scientists for refusing to acknowledge the possibility of "demonic interference in the experiments" and encouraged Christian scientists to begin "disentangling long-ignored patterns of God's creation from the activity of demons." For Reconstructionists like North, regular supernatural intervention in the affairs of Creation proved that the universe was not a closed system (which the Laws of Thermodynamics presuppose). Therefore appeals to the Second Law of Thermodynamics and the inevitable triumph of entropy were invalid and in stark contrast to the postmillennial conviction that the universe would only grow more energetic and orderly as heaven is brought to bear upon the Earth. North offered a book-length treatment of the issue from the postmillennial perspective in his *Is The World Running Down?* (1988). Gary North, "Books Review: *The Secret Life of Plants*," *Journal of Christian Reconstruction* 1, no. 2 (Winter, 1974), 180.

¹¹¹ Gary North, "Soft-Core Creationism," *Dispensationalism in Transition* 1, no. 2 (February, 1988), 2.

¹¹² Kenneth L. Gentry, "Dispensational Postmillennialism?" *Dispensationalism in Transition* 4, no. 4 (April, 1991), 1.

those who prepare for it.”¹¹³ Part of this preparation for Reconstructionists involved influencing textbooks used by homeschooling families (as well as private Christian schools) away from their premillennial, Baconian approaches to science and toward a postmillennial presuppositionalism which was inherently skeptical of claims by environmental scientists.

While knowledgeable observers of evangelicalism have rightly credited Rousas J. Rushdoony as the “Father of Christian Homeschooling” for shaping its philosophical foundations and tirelessly defending the movement in court, no individual had a greater influence over the textbooks used by that movement than its respective “Mother”: Mary Pride.¹¹⁴ A former feminist, Pride’s first book—*The Way Home: Beyond Feminism, Back to Reality*—echoed much of Rushdoony’s thinking on the Family sphere and pointed to the evangelical Church as the source of women’s dissatisfaction. “Homeworking” was the truly biblical solution and a means to “take back control of education, health care, agriculture, social welfare, business, housing, morality, and evangelism from the faceless

¹¹³ Rousas J. Rushdoony, “The Family,” *The Freeman* 23, no. 7 (July, 1973), 431-432.

¹¹⁴ In the eyes of Francis Schaeffer’s son, Frank, Pride quickly became the “leading guru” of the Christian Homeschool movement and, along with Rushdoony, one of the two people most responsible for both its direction and its growth. Frank Schaeffer, *Crazy for God: How I Grew Up as One of the Elect, Helped Found the Religious Right, and Lived to Take All (or Almost All) of It Back* (New York, NY: Carroll & Graf Publishers, 2007), 301.

institutions to which we have surrendered them."¹¹⁵ *The Way Home* also demonstrated the influence cornucopian economists already had on Pride's thinking as well as her deep suspicion of the environmental movement. Calling overpopulation "the great excuse for feminist barrenness," she wrote that the Bible had nothing to say about the dangers of overpopulation and directed readers to Julian Simon's *The Ultimate Resource* and other anti-Malthusian books to discredit such notions.¹¹⁶ She favorably cited scientist Barry Commoner's argument that pollution stemmed more from technology than population, but expressed little confidence in the environmental movement given that "the anti-population-growth movement is so heavily subsidized by the leaders of some very polluting industries suggests that the population panic may be intended to deflect sincere environmentalists from attacking the real roots of pollution." Ultimately, she concludes (much as Rushdoony had) that overpopulation cannot be a concern if a society adheres to biblical principles: "Overpopulation does not exist. Unbelief does. The only reason a

¹¹⁵ Mary Pride, *The Way Home: Beyond Feminism, Back to Reality* (Westchester, IL: Crossway Books, 1985), xii-xiii. Pride argued that feminism was a natural response for housewives who felt bored and trapped now that public schools watched after the children and labor-saving appliances eliminated hours of domestic chores. She wrote that the "ham-fisted" arguments trying to "keep those uppity women in their place" only made feminism's appeal stronger. Thus, Pride blames churches for failing to teach the true calling of Christian women: "The sad truth is that the 'traditional' role which feminist attacked in the fifties had already lost its scriptural fullness. Christian women were staying home out of habit, not out of conviction. Women had been robbed of their role, even through they were 'in their place.' *And they were robbed by the church.*" Pride, *The Way Home*, xii.

¹¹⁶ Pride, *The Way Home*, 58-60; Reconstructionists not only rejected the idea of human overpopulation, they have also rejected the "myth of pet overpopulation." As Martin Selbrede has written, contrary to the claims by many animal rights activists, shelters "kill out of convenience" rather than need. Thus a "culture of death" manifests in general disregard for both human life (such as with abortion) and animal life—a culture which they claim can only be remedied by the application of biblical law and Christians exercising proper dominion over even the family pet. Martin Selbrede, "God's Law: The Only Hope for Animals," *Faith For All of Life* (May/June, 2011): 6-11.

large number of people become a curse to themselves and others is that they do not believe in the Lord Jesus Christ.”¹¹⁷ Pride would expand on her Reconstructionist thoughts in a sequel—*All The Way Home*—in which she offered Christian families guidance in applying biblical principles (“My home *is* a Christian nation.”) and continued to push readers toward Simon as well as committed Reconstructionists including David Chilton, George Grant, and Joel Belz.¹¹⁸

Pride’s greatest contribution to the Christian homeschooling movement was without a doubt her “Big Book” series which provided families with subject-by-subject catalogues of Christian-based educational resources. Her first two volumes—*The Big Book of Home Learning* (1986) and *The Next Big Book of Home Learning* (1987)—bore relatively little overt Reconstructionist influence, though her disdain for environmentalism had already begun to surface. “Let me hereby cast my vote for teaching kids *real* medical skills,” she wrote in 1987, “unlike such esoteric subjects as the ecology of freshwater marshes...”¹¹⁹ However, her third edition—*The New Big Book of Home Learning*, published in 1988—began exposing Christian homeschooling families to Pride’s decidedly Reconstructionist antagonism toward environmentalism. She described one conservative curriculum’s ecology unit as having “a semi-Christianized ‘New Age’

¹¹⁷ Pride, *The Way Home*, 62-63.

¹¹⁸ Mary Pride, *All The Way Home: Power For Your Family To Be Its Best* (Westchester, IL: Crossway Books, 1989), 239-240.

¹¹⁹ Mary Pride, *The Next Book of Home Learning* (Westchester, IL: Crossway Books, 1987), 55.

flavor” before launching into more pointed attacks.¹²⁰ The study of ecology she warned, had become “cover for repressionist social activism” promoting the idea that humanity was the “destroyer of the plane” and that its population needed to be drastically reduced. Environmentalists (especially those from the upper class) operated according to a “have humans” doctrine which fetishized nature in the absence of people. Almost as a gag, she pointed families to Paul Ehrlich’s *The Population Bomb* before offering the sardonic description:

Discover how, in order to save us from this terrible doom, we need government to step in with some “apparently brutal” solutions such as loading up the food supply with anti-reproductive agents and cutting off food aid to India. How *did* we make it through the Seventies, anyway?

Rather than listing a price and encouraging families to purchase a copy for themselves (as the volume does for most other books mentioned), she simply noted: “Your library has a copy.”¹²¹ In contrast to Ehrlich, she highly recommended *The Resourceful Earth* by Julian Simon and Herman Kahn as a valuable resource—emphasizing in her description how “in every area of apocalyptic environmentalism, *real* experts present the facts.” She followed this again with Simon’s *The Ultimate Resource* and the assurance that humans

¹²⁰ Mary Pride, *The New Big Book of Home Learning* (Westchester, IL: Crossway Books, 1987), 128; Pride also presented David Chilton’s *Productive Christians in an Age of Guilt* as the “grand prize winner for Christian” interested in studying economics. Furthermore, she recommended anything published by North’s Institute for Christian Economics, specifically describing Reconstructionists as Christians who “not only believe they have found some answers but they think it’s time to do something about it.” Pride, *The New Big Book of Home Learning*, 287, 290.

¹²¹ Pride, *The New Big Book of Home Learning*, 258.

were “not a detriment to the environment, but the earth’s greatest resource.”¹²² Across the subjects of economics, government, and history she recommended the works of David Chilton, American Vision, and North’s Institute for Christian Economics.

In stark contrast to Pride’s Reconstructionist-inspired anti-environmentalism, the textbooks produced by the fervently premillennial Bob Jones University and A Beka Book tended to reflect a much greater ecological sensitivity. Where Pride’s “Big Book” volumes promoted A Beka Book and Bob Jones textbooks, they were careful to note where eschatology was “handled separately from other subjects, making it possible for families with diverse eschatological views to use these book.”¹²³ BJU’s *Basic Science for Christian Schools* introduced students to the principle of Two Books Theology from its introduction, encouraging them to study science because “the physical universe reveals the power and majesty of our God.”¹²⁴ In considering the issue of industrial pollution, the authors pointed to Deuteronomy 22:6-7 and preached a clear ecological message:

God taught His people an important lesson in conservation. When they hunted birds for meat, they were to take either the bird or its young, but never both... We need the products of the industries that dump sulfur oxides into the air. And we also need to conserve the environment for future generations. Man should not selfishly take what he wants and leave a depleted world... we must work to find ways to produce without destroying our environment.”¹²⁵

¹²² Pride, *The New Big Book of Home Learning*, 258.

¹²³ Pride, *The New Big Book of Home Learning*, 277.

¹²⁴ John E. Jenkins and George Mulfinger, Jr., *Basic Science for Christian Schools* (Greenville, SC: Bob Jones University Press, 1983), vii.

¹²⁵ Jenkins and Mulfinger, Jr., *Basic Science for Christian Schools*, 255.

John S. Wetzel, author of BJU's *Basic Chemistry for Christian Schools*, took an even more direct approach to addressing pollution and acid rain. After considering the complexities surrounding the issue, he concluded that the only effective solution to the problem must "attack its source—the industrial plants." This solution took on a sense of urgency as he reminded students that God had entrusted humans with the care of creation's resources and therefore we "must not recklessly abuse them and deface the environment."¹²⁶

At first glance, Beka Horton and her husband Arlin of A Beka Book¹²⁷ might seem to have been carbon copies of Pride and Rushdoony given their shared distrust of public schools, but key differences shaped their opposition to secular education. Where scholars have tended to treat anti-secular premillennial educators like the Hortons and the staff of Bob Jones University as interchangeable with anti-secular Reconstructionists like Rushdoony and Pride, this has only obscured key distinctions.¹²⁸ The Hortons preached a separatist strand of fundamentalism with a heavy emphasis on piety. Thus, although they had met at Bob Jones University, by 1974 they had become convinced that the South Carolina university had become polluted with secularism and launched Pensacola

¹²⁶ John S. Wetzel, *Basic Chemistry for Christian Schools* (Greenville, SC: Bob Jones University Press, 1985), 337.

¹²⁷ In 2017 A Beka Book rebranded itself as Abeka under its new Abeka Book LLC.

¹²⁸ An example of such confusion can be seen in Adam Laats, "Forging a Fundamentalist 'One Best System': Struggles Over Curriculum and Educational Philosophy for Christian Day Schools, 1970—1989," *History of Education Quarterly* 50, no. 1 (February, 2010): 55-83.

Christian College. This was also why they placed an even greater emphasis on dispensational premillennialism than BJU textbooks did and why their curriculum included textbooks (written by Beka) interpreting the Book of Revelation. A Beka Book's *Book of the Revelation* traced the lineage of Bible-believing Christians as running through all of the major premillennial dispensationalist figures: John Darby, Dwight L. Moody, the Winona Lake Bible Conferences, Donald Grey Barnhouse, C. I. Scofield, J. Frank Norris, John R. Rice, Billy Graham, up to the present. This prophecy-oriented textbook also promoted ecological concern and emphasized stewardship over dominion. Whereas Reconstructionists used their doctrine of Christ ruling over the present world (as opposed to premillennialists' conviction that Satan would rule until Judgement Day) to guide their study of science as a form of dominion, Horton refuted such belief. She taught students that the scroll of Revelation 5—which would be handed over to Christ—represented the “Title Deed to the Earth.” Therefore she wrote:

Man was given dominion over the earth, but when man sinned in the garden of Eden, man lost his dominion to earth, surrendering it to Satan. As a destructive tenant, Satan has ruined man and earth...As Creator and Redeemer, Christ rightfully owns the title deed to the earth; therefore, He has the right to send the appropriate judgements to reclaim the earth.

A Beka Book taught that it would be through these apocalyptic judgements that “the present polluted atmosphere and earth will be purged and restored.”¹²⁹ Horton did

¹²⁹ Beka Horton, *Book of the Revelation* (Pensacola, FL: A Beka Book Publications, 1993), 201 & 244.

identify the New Age movement as sign of the end times and linked it to the “old religion of worshipping nature,” but never associated with the broader environmental movement—only warning against those who advocated for “extreme” forms of environmental protection.¹³⁰

Environmental stewardship was nothing new in the Horton’s A Beka Book curriculum, having appeared in textbooks as early as 1977. In *Investigating God’s World*, author DeWitt Steele had emphasized the Two Books Theology that premillennialists embraced: “Students need to be shown the handiwork of God as it manifests itself in the physical world around them. How else can they gain an appreciation of the providence of God?”¹³¹ Rather than debating the definition of conservation, Steele declared that everyone had a stake in such efforts because “none of us want to live in a polluted world.”¹³² Steele would even go so far as to praise state and federal governments for taking the lead on protecting water supplies from pollution—offering a positive depiction of the Environmental Protection Agency, and even stressing the importance of having governments prosecute polluters: “If our laws are properly enforced, we can be confident that our water supplies will be safe for future generations.”¹³³

¹³⁰ Horton, *Book of the Revelation*, 180.

¹³¹ DeWitt Steele, *Investigating God’s World* (Pensacola, FL: A Beka Book Publications, 1977), iv.

¹³² Steele, *Investigating God’s World*, 333.

¹³³ Steele, *Investigating God’s World*, 345-346.

“Christian America” Historical Revisionism as a Conduit for Postmillennial

Environmental Skepticism

“Overall, American environmentalism can be seen as rooted in protests against the discourse of Manifest Destiny,” wrote scholar Melanie Gish.¹³⁴ Postmillennialism, as one of the most potent theologies of nationalism, has often served to silence such environmental protests—shoring up the providential justification for the nation’s extraction and accumulation of natural resources. From the Puritans “taming a wilderness” to Fountain Pitts’ capitol sermon celebrating the young nation’s Manifest Destiny to Reconstructionists promoting “Christian America” revisionism, eschatologically-infused nationalism has often facilitated ecological exploitation. As early as 1965, Rushdoony was calling for what he called “Christian revisionism,” a mission of historical reinterpretation that he said was “long overdue” and a “moral imperative” for his young Reconstructionist movement.¹³⁵ According to his revised history, the nation had been founded in covenantal obedience to God’s laws and both its government *and its geography* identified it as the greatest link in a “Chain of Christian Civilization.” Possessing both exceptional natural resources and a settler population committed to the godly development of those resources, the North American continent soon produced a “Christian America” with the potential to transform the world and

¹³⁴ Melanie Gish, *God’s Wounded World: American Evangelicalism and the Challenge of Environmentalism* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2020), 13.

¹³⁵ Rousas J. Rushdoony, *The Nature of the American System* (Nutley, NJ: Craig Press, 1965), 1, 3.

inaugurate the Millennium.¹³⁶ (As for the rest of the world in history, its societies had lacked either the spiritual attitude or favorable latitude to fulfill the role the United States now occupied.)¹³⁷ He contrasted his revisionism with virtually all other accounts by historians which, in his evaluation, assured Americans that “American history is a long account of guilt, toward Indians, Negroes, minority groups, labor, Mexico, and, ultimately, all the world as well for refusing to enter the League of Nations.” The purpose of such guilt-inducing history was to produce a “submissive populace” stripped of its God-ordained productivity and made receptive to the “perverse politics” of socialism.¹³⁸ Science, therefore, was not the only school subject in which premillennial and Reconstructionist views on ecology clashed. Millennialism and nationalism produced similarly conflicting attitudes toward Creation when students opened their history textbooks.

¹³⁶ Rushdoony would plainly state this principle of the physical environment responding to godly conduct in 1994 when he wrote: “The religious character of weather, soil fertility, and the congeniality of the earth to man is a basic assumption of Scripture.” Rousas J. Rushdoony, *Systematic Theology In Two Volumes* (Vallecito, CA: Ross House Books, 1994), 965.

¹³⁷ For all of Rushdoony’s attempts to link the United States to a “Chain of Christian Civilization” which ran through Western history, he drew a sharp line between the nation’s past and the Enlightenment. He rejected the interpretation of the Enlightenment and its glorification of humanity’s “autonomous reason as the ultimate judge and arbiter of reality” as being the driving force behind the American Revolution and the nation’s subsequent development. Writing at the same time, the premillennialist *Eternity* openly questioned how “Christian” the founders actually were. It concluded that they “were more influenced by Enlightenment rationalism and its religious counterpart deism.” In contrast to Reconstructionist attempts to revive a mystical past, premillennialists felt much less indebted to the Founders and warned that “some of our great historical foundations should not be restored.” Rousas J. Rushdoony, “The Myth of an American Enlightenment,” *Journal of Christian Reconstruction* 3, no. 1 (Summer, 1976), 91; Russell T. Hitt, “How Christian Were The Founding Fathers,” *Eternity* 27, no. 7 (July, 1976), 11 & 20.

¹³⁸ Rousas J. Rushdoony, *The Politics of Guilt and Pity* (Nutley, NJ: Craig Press, 1970), 19-20.

Rushdoony was not alone in his quest for a Christian revisionist interpretation of American history. Many of those who published similar interpretations also shared his Reformed understanding of Old Testament law and saw the United States as the culmination of the “Chain of Christian Civilization.” In *The Light and The Glory*, one of the earliest and most influential Christian revisionism textbooks, authors Peter Marshall and David Manuel dedicated their book to “all the nameless early Americans who chose the Covenant Way.” They argue that God’s covenantal relationship did not end with Jesus, asking, “what if God’s point of view had never changed [and] God continued to deal with nations corporately, as He had throughout Old Testament history?”¹³⁹ They note that while social decay has appeared to signal that God was lifting His protective grace:

...recent natural phenomena also seem to bear witness to it. There have been earthquakes, and droughts and floods; there have been untimely frosts, a slight but significant drop in the average mean temperature, and freak weather conditions which have lately seen hurricanes in California...Add to this the new strains of crop blight and infestation, which technology seems no longer able to check and, to borrow a phrase from the Puritans, it would seem that God’s Controversy with America has begun in earnest.¹⁴⁰

Thus, in contrast to premillennial prophecy writers who viewed such changes in light of the environmental crisis, these authors interpreted them in Reconstructionist fashion: as Old Testament judgements for national sins.

¹³⁹ Peter Marshall and David Manuel, *The Light and the Glory* (Grand Rapids, MI: Fleming H. Revell, 1977), 18-19.

¹⁴⁰ Marshall and Manuel, *The Light and the Glory*, 354-355.

Marshall and Manuel's book would directly inspire the best-selling and most influential example of "Christian America" (especially among homeschooling families): Mark A. Beliles and Stephen K. McDowell's *America's Providential History*. Echoing Rushdoony's consistent criticism of antinomianism, they point to the lack of economic development in Africa (despite its intense Christianization) as due to missionaries only giving the people "a truncated Gospel message devoid of Biblical answers to anything not strictly of a pietistic or personal nature."¹⁴¹ Similar to Reconstructionists, they argue for a presuppositionalist approach to history, beginning with the Dominion Mandate from Genesis, establishing the legitimacy of the Three Spheres (Family, Church, and State) and depicting the physical creation as God's "props" which He providentially placed in such a way so as to guide the spiritual development of human civilizations.¹⁴² They promote the idea that when Christ spoke of his servants "occupying" managerial positions, he was "giving a clue to Christians as to how to gain control of civil government." They stress that Old Testament law was not abolished with Christ, but that Christ empowered Christians now to carry out that law and the more they did so personally, the more those laws would be reflected in their government. With endnotes and a bibliography that repeatedly cite Reconstructionist leaders such as David Barton, David Chilton, Gary DeMar, Gary North, Rousas Rushdoony, and John Whitehead, the source of such clear

¹⁴¹ Mark A. Beliles and Stephen K. McDowell, *America's Providential History* (Charlottesville, VA: Providence Foundation, 1989), 4.

¹⁴² Beliles and McDowell, *America's Providential History*, 5, 10.

Christian revisionism in *America's Providential History* becomes readily apparent.¹⁴³ However, outside observers would still regularly draw inaccurate connections from such textbooks to premillennialism. In his book, Bill Moyers pointed to *America's Providential History* specifically and its claim that “there is no shortage of resources in God’s Earth... [because] God has made the earth sufficiently large with plenty of resources” to link dispensationalists to anti-regulation Republicans.¹⁴⁴ Had Moyer been familiar with the deep animosity Reconstructionists harbored toward dispensationalists, he might have avoided this error.

Whereas Beliles and McDowell wore their Reconstructionist influences proudly, other Christian homeschooling textbooks were more discreet. Throughout Pride’s homeschool catalogues, she promoted textbooks based on what was called the “Principle Approach”—a softened version of Rushdoony’s presuppositionalism and commitment to biblical law. Developed by Rosalie J. Slater and Verna M. Hall through their Foundation for American Christian Education in the mid-1960s, by the 1980s curriculum teaching this application of biblical principles to every area of life became available to

¹⁴³ Beliles and McDowell, *America's Providential History*, 27.

¹⁴⁴ Moyers, *Welcome to Doomsday*, 29-30. Today, Beliles’ America Transformation Company partners with fellow Reconstructionist Dennis Peacocke’s Statesmen Project in a nationwide effort to form “Community Action Councils.” These councils work to train and network postmillennial leaders in order to “transform our cities” through the application of Old Testament principles current problems. As for McDowell, he has frequently collaborated with Reconstructionist historian David Barton and his Wallbuilders organization. He has also appeared alongside leading Reconstructionists like R. J. Rushdoony, Gary DeMar, Greg Bahnsen, and Gary North in material promoting the application of Biblical law to present-day government.

homeschooling families. Pride defined this Reconstructionist-style, presuppositional pedagogy as:

Briefly stated, it is the belief that God has given us principles that govern every area of life: politics, education, business, and even such mundane things as dress and fashion. Followers of the Principle Approach also believe that America, being founded by users of this approach, has a unique opportunity in history to bring the gospel to the world. Their concentration so far (in writing) is on “the relation between Christianity and America and its form of government...Although the Principle Approach as it now stands involves much study of American history, it is *not* a history course. Rather, the history is shared in order to give us an example of how to apply [Biblical principles] to all areas of our lives, since many of America’s founders strove to do so.¹⁴⁵

For families still uncertain as to the importance of the Principle Approach’s message, Pride offered another definition which emphasized the approach’s role in the fate in of the United States:

According to the Principle Approach, the behavior of nations is governed by God’s immutable laws, and nations advance or decline proportionally as they obey or offend. America’s success is then explained in terms of the colonies’ early covenants with God, and because our laws were patterned on Biblical models.¹⁴⁶

Given its resonance with Reconstructionism, both the Chalcedon Foundation and the Institute for Christian Economics praised those organizations developing Principle Approach curriculum, such as Slater and Hall’s FACE, the American Christian History

¹⁴⁵ Pride, *The New Big Book of Home Learning*, 35.

¹⁴⁶ Pride, *The New Big Book of Home Learning*, 314.

Institute, the Mayflower Institute, and the Plymouth Rock Foundation. Although Rushdoony maintained sharp reservations about such an approach, one of Chalcedon's writers would later place a posthumous stamp of approval on such curriculum, calling it "representative" of Rushdoony's views of history.¹⁴⁷ One book in particular, James B. Rose's *A Guide to American Christian Education for the Home and School* (praised by Pride as "the book on the Principle Approach") exemplified the shared vision of Reconstructionists and Principle Approach educators. Dedicated to Slater and Hall, Rose's book is cornucopian in the extreme, teaching students that economics is the study of how God has provided "infinite resources" for human enterprise.¹⁴⁸ It also promoted the view that the extraction and utilization of natural resources marks a civilization's spiritual development. In describing the "spiritual character" of the Aborigines, it typifies the entire Australian continent as an example of "man fallen afar from God" given the natives "exist as animals" and natural resources have not been "harnessed and mastered for his benefit."¹⁴⁹ Similar analysis was performed on Native Americans, the "savages" of the Amazon, most of Africa, and several regions of Asia. Reconstructionists like Pride were eager to promote Principle Approach textbooks to families and private schools given that, as Gary North candidly outlined, the three keys to their movement's

¹⁴⁷ Ron Kirk, "What's Right about Christian Education Today," *Chalcedon Report*, no. 444 (September, 2002), 7. Although Rushdoony and Verna Hall had worked together at the Volker Fund and maintained a lifelong friendship, he never granted full approval to such curriculum as he favored the concrete personhood of Jesus over the abstract principles which Hall and others worked to systematize.

¹⁴⁸ James B. Rose, *A Guide to American Christian Education for the Home and School: The Principle Approach* (Camarillo, CA: American Christian History Institute, 1987), xix.

¹⁴⁹ Rose, *A Guide to American Christian Education for the Home and School*, 266.

influence were “the Presbyterian oriented educators, the Baptist school headmasters and pastors, and the charismatic telecommunications system.”¹⁵⁰

While conservative evangelicals were becoming an increasingly patriotic lot as the Cold War deepened, it was certainly not on account of their premillennialism. One of premillennialism’s most ardent defenders, the fundamentalist Noel Smith, often sounded like an anti-Rushdoony when describing the development of the United States. Whereas Rushdoony took great pride in Christian Europe, Smith was less impressed—writing to his Jewish colleagues, “When our Anglo-Saxon forebears were savages engaging in the art and pleasures of cannibalism, your fathers would not seethe a kid in its mother’s milk.”¹⁵¹ Smith was also highly critical of the United States’ westward expansion and its industrialization. While giving the closing address at the 14th Annual Convention of the American Council of Churches, Smith presented a less-than-flattering account of the nation’s past:

¹⁵⁰ North quoted in Frederick Clarkson, "Christian Reconstruction: Theocratic Dominionism Gains Influence," in *Eyes Right! Challenging the Right Wing Backlash*, ed. Chip Berlet (Boston: South End Press, 1995), 72; Along with Pride’s *Big Book* series, another volume which helped to expose conservative evangelicals to Reconstructionist thinking was the Arthur S. DeMoss Foundations volume *The Rebirth of America*. It featured essays written by several leading figures within the Moral Majority (who tended to hold premillennial views) encouraging readers to take political action. However, the final section of the volume directed readers to further resources—many of them offered by Reconstructionists. While overtly Reconstructionist organizations like Chalcedon and the Institute for Christian Economics were not included, the extensive guide promoted the likes of Gary DeMar, Larry Burkett, Tom Rose, Verna Hall, John Whitehead’s Rutherford Institute, the Plymouth Rock Foundation, *World* magazine, and books such as *The Light and the Glory*. Most importantly, the volume repeated the core principle of Reconstructionist catastrophism, declaring that “the underlying principles of God’s dealings with Israel are applicable to America” and that as a result of America’s failure to honor Old Testament covenants “America is facing the judgement of God militarily, economically, and morally.” Nancy Leigh DeMoss, *The Rebirth of America* (Philadelphia, PA: Arthur S. DeMoss Foundation, 1986), 211-213.

¹⁵¹ Noel Smith, “To The Jews,” *Baptist Bible Tribune* 3, no. 35 (April 3, 1953), 4-5.

...we made the Indians drunk. Then we robbed them of their lands...[the railroads] were built by corruption and the blackjack...Andrew Carnegie's steel empire was built of coal and human blood, The workmen had no rights that were not determined by the almighty dollar...The coal mines were slave camps."¹⁵²

Smith's pessimism emerged from both his personal experiences and his premillennialism, as the Bible's prophecies—if they included the United States at all—foretold of only judgement and destruction.

From the late nineteenth century up to World War II, the two most common interpretations of the United States' prophetic destiny were that it would be grafted into a future European confederation (a revived Roman Empire helmed by the Antichrist) or that it would be one of the "young lions" referred to in Ezekiel 38 (the lion referring to the British empire and its former colonies). In 1968, S. Franklin Logsdon, pastor of D. L. Moody's own Memorial Church in Chicago, found an alternative interpretation which proved increasingly popular among premillennialist. Logsdon speculated that the increasingly mighty and technologically-advanced United States might actually be the final iteration of the city of "Babylon" (Jeremiah 50 & 51). He wrote that since *all* nations will eventually come to an end that the United States will "have her national

¹⁵² Noel Smith, "The Scriptures: The Interpreter of the Perilous Times," *Baptist Bible Tribune* 6, no. 16 (November 4, 1955), 5. Smith, a former railroad employee, was a consistent critic of the super rich and especially Andrew Carnegie. As he wrote, "I know that every dollar of Andrew Carnegie's money has been drenched in the blood and tears of groaning men and starving women and children." Noel Smith, "America's Impending Calamities And How Christian People Should Face Them, Part VI: My Personal Views On Some Matters," *Baptist Bible Tribune* 9, no. 18 (November 14, 1958), 4-5.

existence terminated by the hand of God.”¹⁵³ Later commentators would add a nuclear twist. David Wilkerson declared with prophetic certainty that America was the “Babylon” of Revelation given that it was “the world’s biggest fornicator with the merchants of all nations.” As a result of its national iniquity, he predicted, the United States would be “destroyed by fire” when the Society Union launched a nuclear first strike and “in one hour, a hydrogen holocaust will engulf America.”¹⁵⁴ Jack Van Impe agreed that the United States resembled Babylon more so than Jerusalem and that Russia would likely launch a surprise nuclear first strike and cripple the nation.¹⁵⁵ In fact, Van Impe pointed the heavily polluted rivers of the United States as strong evidence that might someday fulfill the role of Babylon given that Isaiah 18 identifies the doomed city as “a land whose rivers are spoiled.”¹⁵⁶ He was not hesitant to shared interpretative credit with scientists either, telling readers that “ecological experts vouch that this significant

¹⁵³ S. Franklin Logsdon, *Is The U.S.A. In Prophecy?* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1968), 8, 60.

¹⁵⁴ David Wilkerson, *Set The Trumpet To Thy Mouth: Hosea 8:1* (Lindale, TX: World Challenge, Inc., 1985), 1-3.

¹⁵⁵ Jack Van Impe, *Everything You Always Wanted To Know About Prophecy But Didn't Know Who To Ask!* (Troy, MI: Jack Van Impe Ministries, 1980), 25; Jack Van Impe, *Your Future: An A-Z Index to Prophecy* (Troy, MI: Jack Van Impe Ministries, 1989), 9-10.

¹⁵⁶ Van Impe, *Revelation Revealed*, 218.

prophecy has occurred in our waterways.”¹⁵⁷ James McKeever, a *post-tribulation* premillennialist (he believed that Christians would go through the seven-year Tribulation period), drew together his lack of confidence in the United States with his acknowledgement of a worsening ecological crisis. Warning readers that they would very likely need to flee the country at some point (given the absence of the United States in prophecy), he noted that other nations were increasingly limiting immigration as a means of limiting pollution and preserving their environments.¹⁵⁸

Anti-Paganism as a Conduit for Postmillennial Environmental Skepticism

While Reconstructionist-style science and history textbooks served as wedges between students and environmentalism, fears of paganism and New Ageism helped to predispose their parents against the movement. Rushdoony’s deep-seated opposition to environmentalism stemmed from his interpretation of history and belief that it was the “pagan nature-mythologies” of more primitive (non-Christian) societies which reduced humans to creatures understood only in terms of nature rather than as God’s creation “set

¹⁵⁷ Van Impe, *11:59...And Counting!*, 162-163; One layman writer, Wesley Meacham, a mathematics and science teacher and an avid attendee of prophecy conferences across the country, discerned another reason why God might single out the United States for destruction. Historically, he wrote, the nation has had an “excess of inventors...Inventions have led to the Industrial Revolution which in turn has led to environmental pollutions. Our Lord is not pleased with the pollution of His planet.” Wesley Meacham, *Troubled Waters: Prophecy From A Layman’s Point of View*. Second edition. (New York, NY: Vantage Press, 1988), 44. Meacham dedicated his book to his father who had taught him premillennialism as a child. He also thanked an unnamed “major petroleum company” for their trial and error models which helped him to narrow down potential future fulfillments of prophecy.

¹⁵⁸ James McKeever, *The Almighty and the Dollar* (Medford, OR: Omega Publications, 1981), 234, 238.

over the world of nature.”¹⁵⁹ As a former missionary among the Native Americans, he cared for them while at the same growing angry at the “noble savage” myths perpetuated by some environmentalists that “the more primitive a people, the wiser they were assumed to be.” Such myths were not innocent romanticizing. Ecology had become “a form of hatred for man, hatred for civilization, a means of destroying it.”¹⁶⁰ The Gaia mythos was the most obvious offender in Rushdoony’s mind and he charged Christians to “take the offensive against this new paganism” which glorified the primitive and directly challenged the notion that Christian civilization resulted in ecological flourishing. Rushdoony’s eco-theology was grounded in the historical conviction that “no people had ever even remotely equaled the Christians in their stewardship of the earth.”¹⁶¹ For North, with his focus on economics, the equation of dominion was simple: “We must do what God requires, so that the creation will do what we require.” Ecological degradation was thus impossible as a result of proper biblical dominion and any attempt to challenge

¹⁵⁹ Rousas J. Rushdoony, *The Biblical Philosophy of History* (Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company, 1969), 20.

¹⁶⁰ Rousas J. Rushdoony, “National Suicide,” *Easy Chair* 105 (September 8, 1985). In this same lecture, Rushdoony also mentioned that “long before the term ecology became popular I had written a paper on the need for ecological common sense from a biblical perspective. No one was interested in publishing it and I lost it somewhere over the years.”

¹⁶¹ Rousas J. Rushdoony, “The Revival of Paganism in the Green Movement,” undated lecture. It is important to note that the Reconstructionist association of paganism with the modern environmental movement was not an entirely unfounded one. As environmental historian Susan Schrepfer observed: “...having denied teleological assurances, by the 1960s it was clear that scientists had failed to establish their own moral authority, despite their importance in the environmental movement. Although [environmentalism] relied increasingly upon ecology in its battles, its supporters denounced scientists as historically arrogant and reductionist... Environmentalists of the 1960s idealized the pagan animism and Arcadian pastoralism of the European barbarian and the American Indian.” Susan R. Schrepfer, *The Fight to Save the Redwoods: A History of Environmental Reform, 1917-1978* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1983), 99-100.

“God’s external blessings for covenantal faithfulness is nothing less than paganism.”¹⁶²

Both the Vallecito and Tyler branches struggled throughout the 1980s to export their anti-paganism justification for opposing environmentalism to the evangelical mainstream given that other Reconstructionists were slower to draw such a connection. When Mary Pride warned parents in 1989 of encroaching New Age and pagan cults, she included “studying Native American culture” among the gateways to nature-worshiping rites, but said nothing about environmentalism.¹⁶³

Premillennialists, despite their hyper-vigilance against New Ageism, saw virtually no reason to suspect environmentalists of harboring pagan motives and were extremely careful to distinguish between science-guided environmentalism and nature worship (Reconstructionists saw no such distinction.) Beginning with his 1970 breakout book, *The Late Great Planet Earth*, Hal Lindsey had taken the growing trend of witchcraft very seriously. Yet even when telling readers that Satan was “alive and well on planet Earth,” he draw no connections between such activity and environmentalism.¹⁶⁴ Jack Van Impe predicted that the Antichrist would be associated with astrology and witchcraft, but drew

¹⁶² Gary North, “Christ’s Mind and Economic Reconstruction,” *Biblical Economics Today* 6, no. 1 (December-January, 1984), 3; Gary North, “The Growth of Human Capital,” *Biblical Economics Today* 3, no. 5 (October-November, 1980), 4.

¹⁶³ Mary Pride and Paul DeParrie, *Ancient Empires of the New Age* (Westchester, IL: Crossway Books, 1989), 187. For Pride and other promoters of Reconstructionist thinking, the economic arguments developed by cornucopian thinkers like Julian Simon were more than sufficient for justifying opposition to environmentalism. These arguments, along with those derived from Young Earth Creationism and Christian revisionism, sustained their anti-environmentalism throughout the 1980s until later when they came to share Rushdoony and North’s suspicion of paganism.

¹⁶⁴ Hal Lindsey, *Satan Is Alive And Well On Planet Earth* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1972), 22-23.

no connection to environmentalism.¹⁶⁵ Billy Graham devoted an entire chapter to identifying occult and pagan activity, but with no mention of environmentalism.¹⁶⁶ John Wesley White (who earned his PhD in Philosophy from Oxford University) believed that the Antichrist would exploit science to cement his power, but that it would be the biosciences rather than ecology.¹⁶⁷ Another writer observed that many Wiccans felt that their religion was the “spiritual element of the ecology movement,” but saw them as only a fringe element.¹⁶⁸ Still another premillennialist, writing directly to concerned parents, noted that while environmentalism *could* be a “gateway” to the New Age, this did not excuse families from teaching children “to distinguish between *stewardship* of creation and *pagan worship* of it.”¹⁶⁹ Leon Morris went so far as to argue that where satanic environmentalism *did* appear it was due to Christians as it was their callousness toward Creation and their defense of polluters which was opening the door for such pagan nature worship.¹⁷⁰

¹⁶⁵ Van Impe, *Your Future*, 17.

¹⁶⁶ Graham, *Approaching Hoofbeats*, 83-102.

¹⁶⁷ White wrote: “One of the ‘gods’ the Antichrist will engage and maximize is the god of ‘science’—not only the physical science, but biophysical science...Riding the wave of this progress, the Antichrist will exploit these terrible potentialities of science to further his own schemes. Here again is why the true Christ *must* come and subdue him.” White, *The Coming World Dictator*, 98.

¹⁶⁸ Jerry Johnston, *The Edge of Evil: The Rise of Satanism in North America* (Dallas, TX: Word Publishing, 1989), 145.

¹⁶⁹ Marlin Maddoux, *What Worries Parents Most: Survival Strategies in a Chaotic World* (Eugene, OR: Harvest House, 1992), 227-228.

¹⁷⁰ Leon Morris, “More Than A Matter of Labels,” *Christianity Today* 23, no. 15 (April 4, 1979), 62.

These premillennialists, in responding to calls by ecologists without worry of pagan associations, may have been harkening back to their antebellum attitudes. As historian Grainger has written, early 19th-century evangelical revivalism cultivated a populist form of nature mysticism that was “perhaps the most significant in the antebellum world.” While their enemies saw the veneration of stream and forest as perverted and primitive, for those evangelicals “with the eyes to see, Christ could be seen, felt, tasted, and even worshipped in the visible creation [almost] without fear of idolatry.”¹⁷¹

By far the most influential book (both in terms of sales and citations) in persuading conservative evangelicals to suspect environmentalism of New Age and pagan motives was Constance Cumbeys’s *The Hidden Dangers of the Rainbow*. Cumbeys, a lawyer by training, purported to have uncovered New Age connections behind the Club of Rome, “spaceship Earth” rhetoric, Greenpeace, the Sierra Club, Zero Population Growth, and many other environmental organizations.¹⁷² Not even evangelicalism was free of such New Age influences. She accused progressive evangelical environmentalist Ron Sider (*Rich Christians in an Age of Hunger*) of being “more New Age than Christian” and warned that the environmental volume *Earthkeeping* produced by evangelical scientists at Calvin College promoted a complete “New Age political

¹⁷¹ Brett Malcolm Grainger, *Church in the Wild: Evangelicals in Antebellum America* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2019), 17.

¹⁷² Constance Cumbeys, *The Hidden Dangers of the Rainbow: The New Age Movement and Our Coming Age of Barbarism* (Lafayette, LA: Huntington House, 1983), 21, 27, 58.

program” with its support for international pollution-control efforts.¹⁷³ However, Cumbey herself was neither a Reconstructionist nor a dispensationalist. She would later call the rival movements “two sides of the same coin” as both movements were only “preparing people for end time disillusionment and deception.”¹⁷⁴

Cumbey’s book proved so popular that it inspired a premillennial backlash against it and its overeagerness to paint *every* environmentalist impulse as New Ageism in disguise. Elliot Miller, a self-professed premillennialist (calling it “the most natural interpretation of Scripture and a more realistic view of history”¹⁷⁵), pointed out that most groups like the Sierra Club were strictly secular organizations and that only Greenpeace had legitimate ties to New Age aims. However, he was particularly disappointed with Cumbey’s discouraging of evangelical environmentalism. He acknowledged, as Lynn White had, that “undeniably the earth has suffered much abuse under the pretext of biblical sanction,” but contended that the solution to this was not to abandon the care of Creation to pagan ideologies. Instead, Christians must “recover a biblical appreciation for creation and man’s role in it, without falling into the opposite and more damning error of worshipping the creature rather than the Creator.”¹⁷⁶ A large part of this recovery, he proposed, would involve eschatology as, given the gravity of the ecological crisis, “it’s

¹⁷³ Cumbey, *The Hidden Dangers of the Rainbow*, 157, 162-166.

¹⁷⁴ Constance Cumbey, “Was Michele Bachmann Betrayed by Peter C. Waldron and Unification Church Interests?” *News With Views* (May 30, 2013), <https://newswithviews.com/Cumbey/constance134.htm>.

¹⁷⁵ Elliot Miller, *A Crash Course on the New Age Movement: Describing and Evaluating a Growing Social Force* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1989), 129-130.

¹⁷⁶ Miller, *A Crash Course on the New Age Movement*, 85-87, 125-126.

hard *not* to think eschatologically in the days in which we live” and also because it had been the Church’s failure in precisely this area which had created the “prophetic void” that New Age prognosticators were rapidly filling.¹⁷⁷

While premillennialists of the 1980s were rarely suspicious of environmentalism as a New Age movement, they did believe they could discern the early signs of New Age thinking creeping into the theology of their charismatic counterparts and it was this suspicion that would ultimately lead to the greatest eschatological confrontation in the history of American evangelicalism. What had been in essence a Cold War between Reconstructionists and premillennialists moved into open conflict in 1983 in the wake of David Hunt’s *Peace, Prosperity, and the Coming Holocaust*. Hunt’s book is something of an anomaly among premillennial prophecy books and its unusual arguments explain why it triggered an extraordinary defensiveness among Reconstructionists. In stark contrast to the “doom and gloom” of his fellow prophecy writers, Hunt was more deeply concerned about those prophecies which described the days before The End as ones of unprecedented peace and prosperity—lulling the nations into complacency just before calamity and tribulation. A premillennialist with close ties to the Pentecostal ministries of the West Coast, he was disturbed by the growth of the positive confession movement and the Satanic influences such a theological error left them open to. In outlining his argument, he warned against the “prosperity teaching” that was sweeping evangelicalism and considered how, if such believers had their prayers answers, “the coming new age of

¹⁷⁷ Miller, *A Crash Course on the New Age Movement*, 131, 137.

peace and prosperity could be the most dangerous period in human history, a time of mind-boggling deception that will be humanly irresistible.” Such deception, he continued, had been predicted by the Apostle Paul who called it “the great *delusion* and associated it with what he referred to as *the lie*.”¹⁷⁸ Thus, at precisely the moment when Reconstructionists were gaining influence over charismatic Pentecostals via the synthesis of postmillennialism with positive confession, Hunt’s book struck directly at this critical point of connection. Although Hunt did not single out Reconstructionists, the implications of his argument were clear to those reading his book in Vallecito and Tyler.¹⁷⁹

The Dispensationalist-Reconstructionist Debates

From the earliest days of their movement, Reconstructionists were highly aware of the theological danger which premillennialism and especially dispensationalism posed to their hopes of marshaling evangelicals for establishing a world built on biblical law—a world which could inaugurate the Millennial Kingdom. In 1976, the *Journal of Christian*

¹⁷⁸ Dave Hunt, *Peace, Prosperity, and the Coming Holocaust: The New Age Movement in Prophecy* (Eugene, OR: Harvest House, 1983), 18. It is also important to note that while Hunt focused on the dangers of “peace and prosperity” rather than “doom and gloom,” as a premillennialist he still took the ecological crisis seriously. In his view, the legitimacy and severity of the crisis was such that it demanded exactly the kind of globally unified response that made those watching for the Antichrist nervous. “Pollution does not stop at national borders,” he wrote before pointing the planet’s oceans as a “clear example of the need for a central regulating body with more authority and power to enforce regulations that the United Nations seems to have.” Hunt, *Peace, Prosperity, and the Coming Holocaust*, 23-24.

¹⁷⁹ Hunt’s book contains only a single, brief reference to Gary North—including a prediction in his newsletter regarding the impending collapse of the U.S. economy as yet another example of the “doom and gloom” approach to prophecy. Hunt was more concerned with the growing influence of New Ageism in the church than a rival evangelical sect.

Reconstruction conducted a “Symposium on the Millennium” and its leading voices made their thoughts on premillennialism clear. North accused them of failing to subdue the Earth and instead retreating “into antinomian pietism and pessimism.” They denounced the premillennial Rapture as unbiblical. Others expressed disbelief that Christians could read the Bible and come away believing that Satan—not Christ—was presently ruling the world. More interested with appearing wise as serpents than displaying dove-like gentleness, they mocked “newspaper exegesis” of these “pessimillennial” prophecy writers. Greg Bahnsen identified premillennialism as one of the three great historical enemies of postmillennialism along with Liberalism and Evolution and argued that Church would have had the strength to overcome the latter two had premillennialism not been “subverting its doctrinal and working strength.”¹⁸⁰ Particularly disturbed by the popularity of Hal Lindsey’s writings, North complained that “those millions who have purchased it and agree with it are conditioned to their position as part of a culturally irrelevant remnant.” Rushdoony agreed, asking who “[after] reading Hal Lindsey’s new book, *The Terminal Generation*, will embark on such godly

¹⁸⁰ Gary North, “Common Grace, Eschatology, and Biblical Law,” *Journal of Christian Reconstruction* 5, no. 1 (Summer, 1978), 23-24, 45; Norman Shepherd, “Justice to Victory,” *Journal of Christian Reconstruction* 5, no. 1 (Summer, 1978), 6; Greg L. Bahnsen, “The *Prima Facie* Acceptability of Postmillennialism,” *Journal of Christian Reconstruction* 5, no. 1 (Summer, 1978), 50, 54. Reconstructionists like North frequently disparaged dispensationalists as “paperback” authors. This was likely taken from Rushdoony himself, who although an avid reader, despised paperback books—finding them “distasteful”—and greatly preferring hardcover books. While a very minor criticism overall, the difference between the pulpy, mass-manufactured paperbacks of premillennial writers and the hardbound works of Reconstructionists illustrates well the contrasting populism and elitism of their approaches. Mark Rushdoony, “Books, My Father’s Treasure,” *Chalcedon Report* 439 (March 2002): 9.

ventures as a Christian school, work to establish Christian political goals, biblical law, and the like?”¹⁸¹

At the crux of this escahto-political debate was the fact that premillennialism encouraged pietism (often described by opponents as passivity) which in turn allowed believers to maintain their distinctions without compromise while also coexisting with others in a pluralistic, democratic society. Peaceful coexistence was not the goal of Reconstructionists. True law-following believers had no choice but to create an entirely new society in line with their own religion. Such an axiom was self-evident to North who wrote that Christians ought to be involved in politics and “we might as well pass biblical laws instead of anti-biblical laws.” In contrast, he told readers that if they wanted to know what premillennial pietists had ever done for Christian civilization, “the answer is clear: *nothing*.”¹⁸²

Even secular observers were quick to recognize that Reconstructionism was “a formidable theology designed to take on all comers.”¹⁸³ However, it has rarely played by a defensive strategy, taking the fight directly at dispensationalists.¹⁸⁴ As soon as North

¹⁸¹ Gary North, “Editor’s Introduction,” *Journal of Christian Reconstruction* 5, no. 1 (Summer, 1978), 3; Rousas J. Rushdoony, “Postmillennialism Versus Impotent Religion,” *Journal of Christian Reconstruction* 3, no. 2 (Winter, 1976), 126.

¹⁸² North, “Editor’s Introduction,” 4-5.

¹⁸³ Frederick Clarkson, “Christian Reconstruction: Theocratic Dominionism Gains Influence,” in *Eyes Right! Challenging the Right Wing Backlash*, ed. Chip Berlet (Boston: South End Press, 1995), 68.

¹⁸⁴ For his part, Rushdoony opposed what he saw as the needless antagonism of potential allies (or at least co-belligerents) by the Tyler faction. He had a warm relationship with charismatics and, while not necessarily on friendly terms with dispensationalists, believed that it would be more productive to attract premillennialists than to attack them.

read Hunt's book, he began pressing the offensive—publishing two books within the next year attacking the theological foundations of premillennialism. The first—*Backwards, Christian Soldiers?*—he wrote for the average believer in the pew in an attempt to undo the influence of premillennialism. From the opening pages, he singled out the “cultural pessimism” of Hal Lindsey's books, calling him “America's most terminal thinker.” Emphasizing the Christian's duty to subdue Creation and dominate culture, he flatly declared: “Pessimistic pietism and optimistic reconstructionism don't mix.” What was needed were soldiers and, as he explained, “‘Bugout theology’ does not produce armies, only refugees,” while for Reconstructionists demanded “no substitute for victory.” North encouraged readers to covertly recruit fellow church members in taking a stand for “the crown rights of King Jesus.” He warned they would encounter resistance and advised them on how to form “Christian Reconstruction Bible study groups” without attracting unwanted attention.¹⁸⁵ His next book, aimed at seminary students, was more explicit. Wearing its subversiveness on its sleeve, *75 Questions Your Instructors Pray You Won't Ask* referred to premillennialists as “third-rate humanists,” declared that there would be no Rapture or Tribulation, and preached the power of dominion (in fulfillment of Christ's dominion over the world) and biblical law. North warned students that his book “could get you in trouble...So be discreet.” North's appendices outlined how students could organize underground study sessions for Reconstructionist teachings, covertly recruit

¹⁸⁵ Gary North, *Backward, Christian Soldiers?: An Action Manual for Christian Reconstruction* (Tyler, TX: Institute for Christian Economics, 1984), xi, 30, 107, 231, 262-266.

other students, avoid infiltration, and defend themselves if they faced disciplinary action at their seminary.¹⁸⁶

Hunt and McMahon followed up their 1983 book with *The Seduction of Christianity* in 1985. Hunt, by this point, was one of the most influential premillennialists within evangelicalism, with books sales in millions and a newsletter (*The Berean Call*) delivered to over 200,000 subscribers. (*The Seduction of Christianity* would go on to sell over a half-million copies.) Much as they did in 1983, Hunt and McMahon's still did not mention Reconstructionism or even postmillennialism directly, but again issued a rebuke of those charismatic ministers adopting Dominion and Positive Confession theologies—which they saw as the “revival of sorcery.”¹⁸⁷ Importantly, they were also highly critical of the charismatic broadcasting empires:

There is growing grass-roots concern that most Christian television is controlled by a handful of people who have the final say on all programming. They wield great power and influence, yet are insulated from any correction from the financially supportive body of Christ and are accountable to no one but

¹⁸⁶ Gary North, *75 Questions Your Instructors Pray You Won't Ask* (Tyler, TX: Spurgeon Press, 1984), 4, 8, 99, 151.

¹⁸⁷ Dave Hunt and T. A. McMahon, *The Seduction of Christianity: Spiritual Discernment in the Last Days* (Eugene, OR: Harvest House, 1985), 12; In a personal letter to the Reconstructionists at Tyler, Hunt would express his surprise at their responses to his books—writing: “I was not aware that I had written ‘books against Dominion Theology.’ I have made some mention of Dominion Theology in the final chapter of each of my last two books, but I doubt that it would require an entire volume to respond to what I have said.” Unfortunately for Hunt, the presses at Tyler would reel off *volumes* of responses for years to come. Hunt quoted in Gary North's forward in Gary DeMar and Peter J. Leithart, *The Reduction of Christianity: A Biblical Response to Dave Hunt* (Fort Worth, TX: Dominion Press; Atlanta, GA: American Vision Press, 1988), ix.

themselves. The same thing applies to the spreading Christian satellite networks.¹⁸⁸

Hunt and McMahon's direct critiques of the very theology that had been making a Reconstructionist-charismatic alliance possible, as well as the television networks that Reconstructionists coveted, spurred an immediate outpouring from the Tyler presses. Within months David Chilton's *Paradise Restored* was arriving on minister's doorsteps offering a systematic defense of Reconstructionists' postmillennialism. With no hint of modesty, North wrote in the book's epilogue that Dominion theology was "the wave of the Christian future" and immediately declared victory over premillennialists as Chilton had "established the terms of the debate over eschatology for the next hundred years, at the very least."¹⁸⁹ Equipped with their own presses and obsessive cadre of writers, the Tyler branch sought to drown premillennial rebuttals in an ocean of ink. In quick succession North oversaw the publishing of two more books by Chilton (*The Great Tribulation* and *Days of Vengeance*) as well one by Ray Sutton (*That You May Prosper*), a professor at Hal Lindsey's alma mater Dallas Theological Seminary. Hunt was attempt to respond to the inundation of arguments. In 1987 he published *Beyond Seduction* and offered readers a fairly complete history of Dominion theology—from the 1948 Latter Rains revival of postmillennialism to the arrival of Reconstructionists in the 1980s. "It is tragic," he wrote, "that for growing numbers of 'Christians', rescuing the lost has

¹⁸⁸ Hunt and McMahon, *The Seduction of Christianity*, 212.

¹⁸⁹ David Chilton, *Paradise Restored: A Biblical Theology of Dominion* (Tyler, TX: Dominion Press, 1985), 323.

somehow metamorphosed into taking over the world.”¹⁹⁰ However, writing alone, Hunt was hopelessly outflanked, especially as Reconstructionists began pressing their advantage on other fronts.

For premillennialists, disaster struck in 1988 as internal and external forces worked to discredit the movement. The most public of these disasters came when an obscure writer violated the cardinal rule of prophecy: no date-setting. Edgar C. Whisenant, a retired NASA engineer, possessed some of the strongest scientific credentials of any 20th-century prophecy writer. Convinced that the “generation” of prophecy referred to an exact forty-year measure of time (beginning with the 1948 formation of the State of Israel) and that the effects of nuclear war fulfilled every remaining prophecy, Whisenant predicted that Rapture would occur between September 11th and 13th in 1988. (Whisenant’s literalism was so absolute that he reasoned Christ’s warning that no one would know the day or hour still implied that one could know the year and month.) He was so convinced by the Holy Spirit of this prediction that he mailed 300,000 copies of his book, *On Borrowed Time: 88 Reasons Why The Rapture Will Be In 1988*, to ministers across the United States. Over four million copies sold in bookstores that year. Whisenant’s book is something of a bizarre read, filled with scientific extrapolations that nuclear winter will last for five years with temperatures never rising above -150 degrees below zero while “cannibalistic gangs” scavenge the wastelands for

¹⁹⁰ Dave Hunt, *Beyond Education: A Return to Biblical Christianity* (Eugene, OR: Harvest House, 1987), 247.

food.¹⁹¹ Although the more established voices in the prophecy field tried to divert attention away from Whisenant's prediction, by the time the dates came and went, premillennialism had suffered its most public humiliation since 1844 and the Great Disappointment of William Miller.¹⁹²

Much farther from the national spotlight, a second blow was struck against the foundations of premillennialism. Not content to wage their war against premillennialism from the presses, Reconstructionists demanded that premillennialists agree to a face-to-face debate. To say that premillennialists had been caught off guard by the rapid emergence of Reconstructionism within the movement's charismatic wing would be an understatement. Most would have agreed with Van Impe who, only a few years prior, had called postmillennialism to be "so ridiculous that theologians have practically abandoned the teaching."¹⁹³ Yet at the behest of Dominion Press, dispensationalists Dave Hunt and Thomas Ice met Gary North and Gary DeMar in Dallas, Texas, on April 14th to debate their positions and—to an extent—the direction evangelicalism should take as it headed into the 1990s. The debate produced no clear winner as North and DeMar insisted on

¹⁹¹ Boyer, *When Time Shall Be No More*, 130; Edgar C. Whisenant, *On Borrowed Time: 88 Reasons Why The Rapture Will Be In 1988* (Nashville, TN: World Bible Society, 1988), 68, 71-74.

¹⁹² Not easily dissuaded, Whisenant returned the following year with *The Final Shout: Rapture Report 1989* and an explanation that his previous calculations had simply been off by one year; Lindsey had been especially vocal in warning evangelicals against uncritically accepting the rebirth of Israel as the definite moment the "final generation" had begun. Stephen Board and Hal Lindsey, "The Great Cosmic Countdown: Hal Lindsey on the Future," *Eternity* 28, no. 1 (January, 1977), 20.

¹⁹³ Van Impe, *Everything You Always Wanted To Know About Prophecy But Didn't Know Who To Ask!*, 110-111.

debating ethics while Hunt and Ice kept the topic focused on eschatology (knowing this was where they held the advantage). Still, the event provoked enough interest in the religious community that a second debate in Dallas, sponsored by the John Ankerberg Show and the National Religious Broadcasters, was scheduled for July 29. This time Hunt and Ice agreed to debate ethics with disastrous results. Before a broadcast audience, DeMar and Ken Gentry gave a sterling performance that left the premillennialists constantly on their heels. Without recourse to their eschatology, Hunt and Ice had few effective rebuttals and Reconstructionists were quick to count the debate as one of their greatest victories.¹⁹⁴ By the end of the year, even the relatively neutral Buckingham had to admit, following Whisenant's disappointment and their weak debate showing against the Deconstructionists, that premillennialists had been "taking it on the chin recently."¹⁹⁵

The Coalition on Revival: Apocalyptic Armistice or Millennial Muzzle?

While Reconstructionists were rapidly gaining ground over both Pentecostals and home-schooling families while outclassing premillennialists in debates, it was influence over the politically-potent Moral Majority and the Religious Right that remained their

¹⁹⁴ Greg L. Bahnsen and Keneth L. Gentry, *House Divided: The Break-Up of Dispensational Theology* (Tyler, TX: Institute for Christian Economics, 1989), xxvi; Thomas Ice, "Back to the Future: Present, Practical Lessons Learned From Biblical Prophecy," *Pre-Trib Research Center* (November-December, 1989); Pressing their advantage, Reconstructionists arranged a third debate for May, 1989. This debate, hosted by the Simon Greenleaf Debate Society featured Greg Bahnsen and premillennialist Wayne House. However, fearing another direct confrontation with the aggressive Reconstructionists, House modified his acceptance of the invitation to stipulate that there would be no cross-examination—only prepared remarks. "In short, a debate with its heart cut out," Bahnsen would later write. Bahnsen and Gentry, *House Divided*, 6-7.

¹⁹⁵ Jamie Buckingham, "Prophets for Profit," *Charisma & Christian Life* (October, 1988), 114.

ultimate goal.¹⁹⁶ If the Reconstructionists had an ace-in-the-hole with the politically-active evangelical mainstream, it was Jay Grimstead. In 1977, with the assistance of Reconstructionists like Bahnsen and R. C. Sproul (as well as men like J. I. Packer and Norman Geisler who would become critics of Reconstructionism), Grimstead began laying the foundation for what would become International Council on Biblical Inerrancy the following year. When the council released its Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy, it brought together two hundred evangelical leaders for the signing, including Tim LaHaye. Impressed by his commitment to the Bible and its standards, as well as his ability to bring together rival theologies for common goals, LaHaye tapped Grimstead to serve as the president of his and wife Beverly's newly-formed political lobby, Concerned Women for America.¹⁹⁷

Buoyed by the success of the ICBI and firmly positioned as an insider within the Religious Right, Grimstead set his sights on uniting the whole of evangelicalism "to help the Church rebuild civilization on the principles of the Bible so God's will may be done on earth as it is in heaven."¹⁹⁸ In pursuit of this task, Grimstead founded the Coalition on Revival (COR) and immediately set about recruiting leading Reconstructionists and

¹⁹⁶ Specifically, it remained the goal of the Tyler branch of Reconstruction its converts. As for Rushdoony, political mobilization was not his primary concern and, by the late 1980s, he was primarily concerned with fostering a family-oriented approach to reconstructing society.

¹⁹⁷ Plowman, "Is Morality All Right?," 78. An ebullient Grimstead declared his summit's Chicago Statement to be "a landmark church document" created "by the then largest, broadest, group of evangelical protestant scholars that ever came together to create a common, theological document in the 20th century. It is probably the first systematically comprehensive, broadly based, scholarly, creed-like statement on the inspiration and authority of Scripture in the history of the church."

¹⁹⁸ "Welcome to Coalition on Revival," Coalition on Revival, <https://www.reformation.net/>.

premillennialists. Success came quickly and by July 4, 1986, Grimstead stood on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial surrounded by over four hundred evangelical delegates ready to sign COR's *Manifesto for the Christian Church*.¹⁹⁹ Written as a "Declaration and Covenant," the *Manifesto* required signees to repent of their concern for "escaping the world at Christ's Second Coming" rather than "rising up en masse" so that Christians might "occupy our proper position as servants in the affairs of law, government, economics, business, education, media, the arts, medicine, and science as the Creator's salt and light to the world." The *Manifesto* concluded with a call for Dominion and the eventual bringing of every society into "as close an approximation to the laws and commandments of the Bible as its citizens will allow."²⁰⁰

Such radical proposals did not go unnoticed. In 1987, *Christianity Today* ran a cover story titled "Democracy as Heresy," exploring the growing Reconstructionist movement and warning readers that men like Rushdoony sought to abolish both the

¹⁹⁹ David Aikman, "Washington Scorecard," *Christianity Today* 32, no. 15 (October 21, 1988), 22.

²⁰⁰ Jay Grimstead and E. Calvin Beisner, *A Manifesto For The Christian Church: An Act of Contrition and Humble Repentance / A Solemn Covenant / A Statement of Essential Truths and a Call to Action* (Murphys, CA: The Coalition on Revival, 1986), 4-6, 9. Notable Reconstructionist and Reconstructionist-inspired charismatic signees included David Chilton, Gary DeMar, Ted DeMoss, Marshall Foster, Joseph Kickasola, Peter Marshall, Gary North, Dennis Peacocke, R. J. Rushdoony, Herbert Schlossberg, Bob Thoburn, Peter Wagner, and Bob Weiner. (Rushdoony, for his part, would soon withdraw his support, disagreeing with COR's emphasis on political takeover rather than his preferred grassroots reconstruction via families.) Notable premillennial signees included D. James Kennedy, Tim LaHaye, Harold Lindsell, Edith Schaeffer, and Jack Van Impe. Grimstead had been in correspondence with Billy Graham since the late 1970s trying to persuade him to join the cause, but as a committed premillennialist who had witnessed politics' corrupting influence firsthand for decades, Graham repeatedly declined.

federal government and democracy in favor of biblical law.²⁰¹ However, protest against the advancing Reconstructionist agenda would be limited mostly to dispensationalists and, following their disastrous year of 1988, Grimstead would be quick to press his advantage. Working feverishly, by 1989 he had drafted and received signatures from leading evangelicals on a new *42 Articles of the Essentials of a Christian Worldview* manifesto along with seventeen “Sphere Documents” which expanded Rushdoony’s Three-Spheres theonomy and outlined action plans for the Christian occupation of fields ranging from government and law to medicine and psychology. These documents were explicitly postmillennial (“We deny that the Church must await the second coming of Christ for the Kingdom of God to be inaugurated on earth in time-space reality and in power”) while rebuking premillennialists for not working to seize political power.²⁰²

In seeking to inaugurate the Kingdom of God “in time-space and in power,” the documents outlined all of the key points Reconstructionists like Rushdoony and North had been envisioning for decades. Beginning with the Dominion Mandate, COR signees affirmed their duty to “overcome, control, and use the natural world” in accordance with “the principles of the free market” while denying the legitimacy of economic systems which promoted “a philosophy of egalitarianism.”²⁰³ They saw little need for

²⁰¹ Rodney Clapp, “Democracy as Heresy,” *Christianity Today* 31, no. 3 (February 20, 1987): 19. 17-23

²⁰² Jay Grimstead and E. Calvin Beisner, *Articles of Affirmation and Denial on the Kingdom of God: A Summary of the Biblical and Historical View* (Murphys, CA: The Coalition on Revival, 1989), 6, 10.

²⁰³ Jay Grimstead and E. Calvin Beisner, *The Christian World View of Business and Occupations* (Sunnyvale, CA: The Coalition on Revival, 1989), 5-6, 8.

environmentalism as, when “balancing concerns about nature and the environment against other needs of humanity,” it would be those other needs “which will often be more important.”²⁰⁴ They affirmed that “the idea of planetary ‘overpopulation’ is a myth” and pledged to “diminish the influence” of those evangelical environmentalists promoting “simple life style” alternatives to consumerism.²⁰⁵ They promoted both “American Christian history” and Young Earth Creationism—even going so far as to include North’s rejection’s of the Second Law of Thermodynamics.²⁰⁶ As for implementing these views, they called for churches to develop programs to “recruit and train” members for political office.²⁰⁷ As for families, they urged them to draft 25-year plans for training their children and grandchildren in reconstructing society and abandon any preoccupation with the idea that Christ might return soon. Doing so, the documents declare, will help Christians and their children to transition “from a ‘victim’ mentality to a ‘conqueror’ mentality.”²⁰⁸

²⁰⁴ Jay Grimstead and E. Calvin Beisner, *The Christian World View of Law* (Sunnyvale, CA: The Coalition on Revival, 1989), 29.

²⁰⁵ Jay Grimstead and E. Calvin Beisner, *The Christian World View of Economics* (Sunnyvale, CA: The Coalition on Revival, 1989), 11, 20. COR’s citation for “simple life style” referred directly to Ron Sider’s *Rich Christians in an Age of Hunger*.

²⁰⁶ Jay Grimstead and E. Calvin Beisner, *The Christian World View of Government* (Sunnyvale, CA: The Coalition on Revival, 1989), 13; Jay Grimstead and E. Calvin Beisner, *The Christian World View of Science and Technology* (Sunnyvale, CA: The Coalition on Revival, 1989), 5-8. In contrast to the modern understanding of entropy, COR declared: “We deny that the universe is proceeding inexorably toward a final state in which all activity and life will cease due to irreversible natural processes.”

²⁰⁷ Jay Grimstead and E. Calvin Beisner, *The Christian World View of Educating Christians on Social, Political, and Moral Issues* (Sunnyvale, CA: The Coalition on Revival, 1989), 12.

²⁰⁸ Jay Grimstead and E. Calvin Beisner, *The Christian World View of Government* (Sunnyvale, CA: The Coalition on Revival, 1989), 13-14. Although Grimstead’s documents claimed that evangelicals could participate in such an agenda “with theological integrity whether one is a pre-, post-, of a-millennialist,” the consistent exhortation running through each of them is that premillennialism must be abandoned in order to fully commit to the reconstruction of society.

Not only had conservative evangelical watchdogs like *Christianity Today* identified the radical and undemocratic urges within Reconstructionism, but secular observers had as well. Thus, while Reconstructionists celebrated their victories and watched their ideas spreading through the evangelical mainstream, close associations with leaders like Rushdoony and North were becoming increasingly politically toxic. Thus Grimstead (along many other “post-Reconstructionists”) exercised great caution when describing himself publicly. When asked directly if he was a theonomist, he replied, “I don’t call myself one,” before adding that he and his partners had come to realize that God’s standard was unchanging and that “it so happens that Rushdoony, Bahnsen, and North understood that sooner.” When asked if COR’s “Manifesto for the Christian Church” was a theonomic document, he again answered that it contained “no teaching unique to theonomy,” before adding that it had been signed by every Reconstructionist leader—both the Tyler and Vallecito branches—and that he hoped it would help correct a generation of premillennial evangelical leaders “wrongly influenced by a less-than-biblical theology coming out of the Scofield Bible.”²⁰⁹ Grimstead also established a “non-quarreling policy” for the coalition which even secular observers recognized as an

²⁰⁹ Randy Frame, “The Theonomic Urge,” *Christianity Today* 33, no. 7 (April 21, 1989), 39.

attempt to muzzle premillennialists (especially dispensationalists) objecting to Reconstructionists' demands for political dominance.²¹⁰

Try as Grimstead might to downplay COR's Reconstructionist influences, by the end of 1990 he would abandon much of this pretense and openly lead COR in drafting a "ministry merge" document which outlined how politically-active evangelicals could abolish non-Christian institutions such as public schools and the IRS—possibly even as soon as the year 2000. The document, consisting of a twenty-four point "master plan" for establishing the Kingdom of God on Earth (going so far as to propose a "Kingdom version of Saturday Night Live" while also abolishing the EPA), did cause a few men such as Robert Dugan (National Association of Evangelicals) to leave the coalition, but much of its ostensibly premillennial leadership remained onboard.²¹¹

Hunt and Lindsey would mount last-ditch efforts to resist the Reconstructionists' sweeping victory, but the tide had turned. In *Whatever Happened to Heaven?* (1988), Hunt expressed his concern that a growing number of Christians were "exchanging the hope for the rapture for a new hope...that Christians can clean up society and elect enough of their own candidates to political office to make *this* world a 'heaven on

²¹⁰ Frederick Clarkson, "Christian Reconstructionism: Theocratic Dominionism Gains Influence," in Chip Berlet, ed., *Eyes Right! Challenging the Right Wing Backlash* (Boston, MA: South End Press, 1995), 70. Eschatological pressures would quickly build to the point that Grimstead would give dispensationalists a chance to air their grievances at yet another debate held in Washington D.C. in January of 1990. *Christianity Today* quoted the Reconstructionist side as praising Grimstead for the opportunity to defend their views but recorded no such praise from the dispensationalist side. One of the dispensational debaters stated that they had no interest in continuing their association with COR, calling the whole thing "wrong-headed." Randy Frame, "Is Christ of Satan Ruler of This World?," *Christianity Today* 34, no. 4 (March 5, 1990), 43.

²¹¹ Randy Frame, "Coalition on Revival: Plan Calls for Doing Away with Public Schools, IRS," *Christianity Today* 34, no. 17 (November 19, 1990), 57-58.

earth.” Unlike his earlier works, Hunt now singled out by name “the Reconstructionists, Kingdom Now Dominionists, and the Coalition on Revival.” In particular, he saw COR as the most influential given that its steering committee “reads like a Who’s Who of evangelical leadership” even though he suspected, given the coalition’s secretive connections to Reconstructionism, that some on the committee “may not be fully aware of the true nature of the agenda which their names and reputations are being used to promote.” This agenda, fashioned by Reconstructionists, was perverting the Great Commission with a “false dream of Christianizing secular culture” and an “unbiblical earthly mindedness.”²¹² Hunt even sympathized with non-believers who unsurprisingly felt threatened by “the determination of these dominionists to force their beliefs upon the rest of society.”²¹³ He was also aware of what such dominionist thinking would mean for the Creation, openly questioning the details of the “task” they saw as commanded by the Dominion Mandate of Genesis:

“What task?” we must ask. Is it to build factories in Yosemite Valley and high-rise condominiums on Pike’s Peak? Is our task to mine all of the minerals and suck up all of the oil? It does require effort to till the soil, but has God given us the task of putting every acre under the plow or of producing a certain yield per acre? If so, there is no mention [in the Bible] of such criteria for measuring “dominion success.”²¹⁴

²¹² Dave Hunt, *Whatever Happened to Heaven?* (Eugene, OR: Harvest House, 1988), 8, 42-43, back cover.

²¹³ Hunt, *Whatever Happened to Heaven?*, 230.

²¹⁴ Hunt, *Whatever Happened to Heaven?*, 229.

Whereas secular observers had once feared that premillennial influences would draw Reagan into Armageddon, Hunt reveals that the true threat would be a nuclear-armed theocracy under Reconstructionist rule:

What could be more fundamental than taking dominion over the atom itself!... Are we to assume that the hydrogen bomb will one day be given to Christians by God to enable them more effectively to “destroy unbelieving cultures” and thus fulfill the Great Commission by completing the dominion task of taking over the world from the godless?²¹⁵

Lindsey added to these warnings, accusing Reconstructionists in *The Road to Holocaust* (1989) of “setting up a philosophical system that will result in anti-Semitism.” By removing the nation of Israel and the Jews (as a distinct people) from the prophetic future through their postmillennialism, Lindsey warned that Reconstructionists and the charismatic converts were recreating the theological conditions which made Christian culpability possible during the Holocaust.²¹⁶ Lindsey recognized, albeit too late, exactly how attractive Reconstructionism appeared to charismatics:

²¹⁵ Hunt, *Whatever Happened to Heaven?*, 234-235.

²¹⁶ Hal Lindsey, *The Road to Holocaust* (New York, NY: Bantam Books, 1989), 3. Lindsey concern over the potential anti-Semitism of postmillennialism was not a new critique. Reconstructionists often held up Oswald T. Allis’ *Prophecy and the Church* (1969) as the first great critique of dispensationalism (Allis called it “faulty and unscriptural literalism”) and one which had never been rebutted. However, such claims overlook examples such as the 1971 Jerusalem prophecy conference where Charles Lee Feinberg had rebuked Allis for rejecting prophetic literalism on account of its Jewishness. “If the literal approach be rejected because it is too Jewish,” Feinberg asked his fellow dispensationalists, “where does one stop?” Charles Lee Feinberg, “The Rebuilding of the Temple,” in Carl F. H. Henry, ed., *Prophecy in the Making: Messages Prepared for Jerusalem Conference on Biblical Prophecy* (Carol Stream, IL: Creation House, 1971), 100-101. Additionally, Gary North never hesitated to declare his belief that Israel had no prophetic future—writing to leading premillennialists that he had “a manuscript ready to go” for the day when Israel was “pushed into the sea.” North quoted in Dave Hunt, *Whatever Happened to Heaven?* (Eugene, OR: Harvest House, 1988), 70.

The natural attraction of the Positive Confessors to the Reconstructionist message revolves around their belief that they can conquer any and all obstacles by "taking authority over them" in the name of Jesus. So when many were introduced to the Reconstructionist emphasis—that the Church has a mandate from God to take authority over the world and establish His dominion over it—most saw it as the ultimate, logical challenge for their kind of faith.²¹⁷

In a rare moment of anger, the normally affable Lindsey issued a stern rebuke of such a subversive political agenda. "The New Testament," he wrote, "doesn't give one exhortation for the Church to make an organized effort to infiltrate governments and seek to take them over in the sense taught by the Dominionists."²¹⁸

Celebratory Reconstructionists, sensing their moment was finally at hand, responded to Hunt and Lindsey with unrestrained vitriol. North rebuked Hunt for calling "into question the power of the Holy Spirit" before mocking his educational credentials (referring to him as someone with only "a bachelor's degree in mathematics") and labeling him a "paperback defender" of unbiblical theology.²¹⁹ Turning to Lindsey, North declared that he was due for a "public thrashing" on account of his book which was both

²¹⁷ Lindsey, *The Road to Holocaust*, 35-36.

²¹⁸ Lindsey, *The Road to Holocaust*, 279. Highlighting the now distinct attitudes between the Vallecito and Tyler branch, he respectfully describes Rushdoony as "unquestioningly a brilliant, original thinker who deserves respect whether one agrees with him or not," before moving on to describe the "Rambo-like" tactics of North and his cohort. Lindsey, *The Road to Holocaust*, 32-33.

²¹⁹ Gary North's foreword in Gary DeMar and Peter J. Leithart, *The Reduction of Christianity: A Biblical Response to Dave Hunt* (Fort Worth, TX: Dominion Press; Atlanta, GA: American Vision Press, 1988), x, xvii. North carried an obvious grudge against Hunt—expressing disbelief at Hunt's *The Seduction of Christianity* becoming the best-selling Christian book of the 1980s while his own exposé of the New Age Movement, *None Dare Call It Witchcraft*, had been ignored by evangelicals and mocked by secularists.

“a terrible mistake” and the equivalent of “chloroform in print.” He called on Lindsey to retire immediately and abandon his “sensational crusade of innuendo and phony endnotes against those whose only ‘crime’ is that they do not share your views on the Rapture.”²²⁰ Gary DeMar and Peter J. Leithart agreed, demanding that Lindsey “apologize to those he defames, repent of his false accusations, and have the book pulled from the market.”²²¹ Hunt and Lindsey’s book remained in print, but the Reconstructionists and their allies like Grimstead remained in power as the 1980s drew to a close.

While Grimstead’s Coalition on Revival signified the greatest beachhead established by Reconstructionists within the political mainstream of evangelicalism, it would also serve to launch the career of the man who would ultimately set the tone for conservative evangelical environmentalism from the 1990s onward. As Grimstead sought a righthand man in drafting COR’s declarations, he became intrigued by a young economist named E. Calvin Beisner.²²² As Grimstead would later explain, it was precisely Beisner’s inexperience that interested him as he was looking for someone who could inject new ideas into the coalition (and who carried little to no political baggage). However, Beisner was no tabula rasa. Already well-versed with both Julian Simon’s cornucopianism and Rushdoony’s theonomy, Beisner would consistently maintain a

²²⁰ Gary North’s foreword in Gary DeMar and Peter J. Leithart, *The Legacy of Hatred Continues: A Response to Hal Lindsey’s The Road to Holocaust* (Tyler, TX: Institute for Christian Economics; Fort Worth, TX: Dominion Press, 1989), v, ix-x.

²²¹ DeMar and Leithart, *The Legacy of Hatred Continues*, xii.

²²² Grimstead first met Beisner in the mid-1970s when he had written to Walter Martin’s cult research center regarding an obscure group. The reply that Grimstead received to his inquiry was from Beisner and so impressed him that he sought out the young researcher and soon struck up a close relationship.

politically appropriate distance from Reconstructionism all while still citing their works, transmitting their ideas, and moving steadily up the ranks of influence within the evangelical mainstream. Beisner's specialty was that of environmental ethics and economics and he, more than any other individual, would work tirelessly to pivot conservative evangelicals away from a position of premillennial environmentalism toward one of outright skepticism and antagonism toward all things green.

4: LEFT BEHIND: THE 1990S AND EVANGELICAL ENVIRONMENTALISM IN TRANSITION

As the 1990s began, premillennialism appeared to be more vulnerable than it had been in almost a century. With postmillennial-inspired evangelical political activism surging and Reconstructionists continuing to attack, it appeared as though premillennialists might again be relegated to the eschatological fringe. However, once again it was the outbreak of war that revived hopes of the Second Coming while checking dreams of Christian utopia. This time the fighting was not in Europe, but rather the Middle East—where images of the apocalypse sprang easily to mind.

The Eco-Millennial Dimensions of the Gulf War

The Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein had attracted moderate prophetic interest several years earlier when he declared himself to be the next iteration of Nebuchadnezzar and began rebuilding the ancient capital city of Babylon. Now, in August of 1990, his invasion of the small nation of Kuwait spiked American interest in biblical prophecy and launched what had been a moderately successful premillennial title from the early 1970s to the top of the best-seller charts. John F. Walvoord, the president of Hal Lindsey's alma mater Dallas Theological Seminary until 1986 and the author of nearly thirty systematic studies of prophecy, typically avoided the kind of "newspaper exegesis" that had made Lindsey famous. However, his 1974 book—*Armageddon, Oil, and the Middle East Crisis*

—was the closest he had come to dabbling in the practice and subsequently would quickly go on to become his best-selling work. While the connections he had drawn between Middle Eastern oil and end time’s scenarios had seemed obvious in the midst of the energy crisis, they took on prophetic prescience now as war was breaking out. Updated and republished by Zondervan in 1990, the book quickly reached #6 on the New York Times best-seller list and selling over a million copies. Surveys at the time found that one in five evangelicals believed that the events in Kuwait and Iraq were the direct fulfillment of End Times prophecy.¹

Although the actual fighting ended within months and did not lead to a Third World War as many secular sources had predicted, the ecological damage continued long after the retreat by Iraqi forces. In particular, the burning Kuwaiti oil wells caught the attention of premillennialists. David Wilkerson had envisioned such a scene in 1985: “Before the great holocaust there will be smaller holocausts—the oil fields of the Middle East will be ablaze, and the smoke will rise night and day as a warning of the greater

¹ Edythe Draper, *The Almanac of the Christian World* (Nashville, TN: Tyndale House, 1992), 6. Zondervan would see a dramatic boost at this time across all of its prophecy titles, with the sales of even Lindsey’s 1970 edition of *The Late Great Planet Earth* doubling. Never one to pass up an End Time’s sales event, Zondervan would again republish Walvoord book in 2007—five years after his death—with updated material from fellow premillennialist Mark Hitchcock regarding the ongoing War on Terror. Other evangelical publishers, would follow suit, such as Tyndale House which rushed Charles Dyer’s *The Rise of Babylon* to presses and had copies waiting on bookstore shelves by February, 1991; James E. Ruark, *The House of Zondervan* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2006), 171.

holocaust yet to come.”² Dave Hunt called it “the worst ecological disaster in history.”³ Another would later write that Hussein’s burning of the wells and spilling of oil into the Persian Gulf had turned the war “against the earth in a perverse act of environmental terrorism.”⁴ Henry Morris connected the burning oil fields to the global trend of burning fossil fuels and polluting the atmosphere with carbon dioxide “and other contaminants that affect both its greenhouse gases and normal precipitation.”⁵ Another wrote that the “atmosphere is thick with pollution” over the burning Kuwaiti fields, but this would pale in comparison to the planet-engulfing smoke that would result if a desperate Saddam Hussein someday managed to ignite the much larger oil fields of Saudi Arabia. Such an act of environmental terrorism would be on par with nuclear winter and fulfill the “gloomy vision of Isaiah” wherein the prophet foresaw that “the earth had been polluted by the dwellers on its face.”⁶

For premillennialists, the threat of ecological damage from the Gulf War was an obvious concern. In republishing *Armageddon, Oil, and the Middle East Crisis*, Zondervan made the decision to keep Walvoord’s 1970s warning of pollution and

² David Wilkerson, *Set The Trumpet To Thy Mouth: Hosea 8:1* (Lindale, TX: World Challenge, Inc., 1985), 14; Even decades later, premillennialists would still connect the smoking oil well of Kuwait to the prophecies of the Bottomless Pit of Revelation. Carl Gallups, *Final Warning: Understanding the Trumpet Days of Revelation* (Washington, DC: WND Books, 2014).

³ David Hunt, *A Cup of Trembling: Jerusalem and Bible Prophecy* (Eugene, OR: Harvest House, 1995), 209.

⁴ Ed Hindson, *Final Signs* (Eugene, OR: Harvest House, 1996), 89.

⁵ Henry M. Morris, *Creation and the Second Coming* (El Cajon, CA: Master Books, 1991), 127.

⁶ David Allen Lewis, *Prophecy 2000*, expanded edition (Green Forest, AR: New Leaf Press, 1992), 370-371; Isaiah 24:4-6.

overpopulation. Readers in 1990 were reminded of how pollution was “rapidly making the earth an uninhabitable planet” and adding “a new and frightening dimension” to prophecies of the sun being sun darkened, the moon turning blood red, and the oceans riven by death. The growing number of mouths to feed were threatened both the reduced supplies of petroleum-based fertilizers as well as “changes in climate.”⁷ According to historian Robert Booth Fowler, the silence from secular environmental organizations toward such Iraqi “scorched earth” policies combined with loud denunciations of the United States’ own pollution led many conservatives to strongly suspect that such activists harbored anti-American sentiments.⁸ However, this suspicion of anti-American sentiment in secular environmental critiques did not mean that premillennialists had suddenly become unabashed patriots. As Billy Graham wrote shortly after the war’s end, seeing the “incredible accuracy and destructiveness of modern conventional firepower” did not swell him with pride but rather left him deeply unsettled as he considered how such weaponry would be deployed in the End Times.⁹

⁷ John F. Walvoord, *Armageddon, Oil, and the Middle East Crisis: What the Bible says about the Future of the Middle East and the End of Western Civilization*, revised edition (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1990), 164-166.

⁸ Robert Booth Fowler, *The Greening of Protestant Thought* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1995), 46.

⁹ Billy Graham, *Storm Warning* (Dallas, TX: Word Publishing, 1992), 181.

“Corporate Raiders for Jesus”: The State of Premillennial Publishing

For all of the attention premillennialists gave to global developments, there was one trend which had escaped their notice—a trend that would radically alter ability of prophecy popularizers to reach their audience. In the years leading up to the 1990s, the tremendous growth and immense value of the evangelical book market had produced waves of corporate mergers as larger publishers—both evangelicals and secular—bought up smaller presses and brought their premillennial catalogues under the control of executives—again, both evangelical and secular—who were unfamiliar with the doctrine.

As historian Daniel Vaca has observed, for centuries books have functioned as the “engines of transdenominational evangelical consciousness.”¹⁰ Since the late nineteenth century they had also served as the engines of premillennial consciousness with publishers regularly attending prophecy conferences, recruiting authors, and promoting the eschatology. In particular, the Zondervan company had become “virtually synonymous” with the doctrine in the minds of evangelical readers ever since one of its two founding brothers, Pat Zondervan, had converted from amillennialism to premillennialism in the 1930s.¹¹ Zondervan would further entrench their premillennial standing when they acquired the preferred publisher of Dallas Theological Seminary (the fountainhead of dispensationalism)—Dunham Publishing Company in 1964. They were not alone in expansion as Baker Book House contracted with Bethany Fellowship of

¹⁰ Daniel Vaca, *Evangelicals Incorporated: Books and the Business of Religion in America* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2019), 12.

¹¹ Pat’s brother Bernie remained a lifelong amillennialist, but left the company’s selection of eschatological titles up to his brother. Ruark, *The House of Zondervan*, 27-28.

Minneapolis a few years later and purchased the rights to much of its catalogue. Soon afterwards the Presbyterian presses at Westminster and John Knox merged and the trend of publishing mergers would only intensify through the 1970s and into the 1980s.¹²

The publishing industry as a whole had languished along with the rest of the economy in the 1970s, but evangelical books proved to be a profitable exception and saw their sales figures consistently *increase*—attracting the attention of larger companies. The 1980s saw a wave of new Bible translations led by Zondervan’s *New International Version* which not only had the effect of crowding out Scofield’s dispensational reference Bible but also of dramatically boosting the financial profile of publishers like Zondervan. After experimenting as a publicly-owned company in the mid-1980s, Zondervan regained private ownership before being purchased by Harper & Row (soon to be HarperCollins) in 1988 for \$56.7 million.¹³ By 1993, not only did an estimated 63% of the world’s Christian books come from the United States, but surveys found that as many as 30% of Americans were reading evangelical books year.¹⁴

¹² Erinn Huebner, “A History of Christian Publishing,” *The Christian Librarian* 61, no. 1 (May 1, 2018), 76-77.

¹³ HarperCollins would go on to acquire the other major premillennial publisher Thomas Nelson in 2012, giving it not only tremendous control over premillennial publishing specifically, but an estimated 50% of the evangelical market as a whole. Vaca, *Evangelicals Incorporated*, 164-168; Ruark, *The House of Zondervan*, 168.

¹⁴ Phillis Tickle, “CBA in Atlanta: The Best and Biggest Show Yet,” *Publishers Weekly* (August 2, 1993, 16-17; For more on how the profile of American religious readers had changed by the early 1990s, see Judith S. Duke, *Religious Publishing and Communications* (White Plains, NY: Knowledge Industry Publications, 1981) and John P. Ferré, “Searching for the Great Commission: Evangelical Book Publishing Since the 1970s,” in Quentin J. Schultze, ed., *American Evangelicals and the Mass Media: Perspectives on the Relationship Between American Evangelicals and the Mass Media* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1990): 99-117.

By the 1990s, every major publishing company had an evangelical wing. However, while those evangelical companies who were purchased maintained that there was no conflict between “monetary and metaphysical objectives,” these parent companies soon began greenlighting only those titles which made secular financial sense.¹⁵ Baker in particular would continue acquiring premillennial presses—adding Fleming H. Revell and Chosen Books in 1992, Brazos Press in 1999, and purchasing Bethany House outright in 2003 to become the last evangelical-owned bastion of premillennialism.¹⁶ Reflecting on the “merger mania” of these years, the grandson of Baker Book House founder Herman Baker praised “corporate raiders for Jesus” and insisted that evangelicals have “reason to celebrate when New York executives invest their substantial resources to generate good Christian books.”¹⁷ However, while this trend had the initial effect of bringing elements such as premillennialism and even charismatic Christianity into the evangelical mainstream, it ultimately led to the dilution of such innovative movements and encouraged a very “middle of the road” kind of evangelicalism.¹⁸

¹⁵ Vaca, *Evangelicals Incorporated*, 162.

¹⁶ Importantly, the acquisition of premillennial presses by Baker was significant because the company had historically drawn its authors from Reformed, amillennial backgrounds. This unfamiliarity with newly-arrived premillennial and especially dispensational authors would be reflected in an overall lack of innovative prophetic works in subsequent years. Ann Byle, *The Baker Book House Story* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2014), 45.

¹⁷ Dwight Baker, “How I Learned to Love Media Conglomerates,” *Christian Retailing* (September 3, 2014), <http://www.christianretailing.com/index.php/news/125-features/industry-issues/news>.

¹⁸ Ruark, *The House of Zondervan*, 164-168.

What premillennial books did make it to press were less likely to influence the whole of evangelicalism as corporate publishers increasingly came to rely on a strategy of market segmentation to maximize profits in the unfamiliar territory of religious publishing. Often conglomerates would simply reprint older premillennial titles such as Walvoord's *Armageddon, Oil, and the Middle East* when global events made them relevant again rather than soliciting new authors with fresh perspectives.¹⁹ Although these reprinted titles were updated with new forewords and a few specific references to current events, their relevance and ability to incorporate new developments—especially as scientists rapidly gained new knowledge of the changing climate—lagged far behind the 1970s heyday of premillennial publishing. Vaca has described this process as conglomerates “bureaucratically weeding out more speculative options.”²⁰ Along with market segmentation and drawing heavily from their back catalogues as opposed to soliciting new prophetic authors, these media conglomerations also sought to ensure that various outlets reinforced (or were at least neutral toward) the messages promoted by the largest platforms. Thus Rupert Murdoch's News Corp which owned HarperCollins and by extension Zondervan and other evangelical publishing houses, appears to have

¹⁹ Christian librarian Gregory A. Smith has described this particular example as “a prime example of trend-sensitive publishing” in which publishers opted for what they believed would sell over what they believed the public needed to read. Gregory A. Smith, “A Survey of Religious Book Publishing with Implications for Collection Development in Christian College Libraries,” *Faculty Publications and Presentations* 7 (January, 2002), 8; Those premillennial authors who rushed to write original interpretations of the Gulf War—such as Noah Hutchings and *The Persian Gulf Crisis and the Final Fall of Babylon*—struggled to get their books to the shelves of Christian bookstores and saw only minimal sales.

²⁰ Vaca, *Evangelicals Incorporated*, 174.

discouraged the kind of premillennial environmentalism that had once been popular.²¹ Those overtly premillennial titles that *would* be published would tend to be either overtly hostile toward environmentalism (such as LaHaye's *The End* series) or completely toothless in addressing such issues (such the works of David Jeremiah).

Tim LaHaye: Premillennial Evangelist, Postmillennial Activist

Reconstructionists were not content to sit idly by and continued to escalated their printed attacks against premillennialism and especially dispensationalists. Taking a new approach, Kenneth Gentry and Gary North now contended that premillennialism was distracting from the full task of evangelism. Gentry's *The Greatness of the Great Commission* (1990) accused dispensationalists of practicing a "scorched-earth evangelism" based on the imminence of the Rapture but which failed to then command new converts to "exercise dominion."²² In its place, Gentry preached a case for postmillennial evangelism as the key to establishing global dominion. Gentry's highly optimistic forecasts of global conversion rates to Christianity would quickly be taken up by Reconstructionist anti-environmentalists as the spiritual corollary to their economic cornucopianism. North began his *Millennialism and Social Theory* (1990) by mocking "pessimillennialists" for their concerns over climate change and other threats to human

²¹ For further analysis of the role of conservative media conglomerates in influencing evangelical's attitudes toward environmentalism, see Robin Globus Veldman, *The Gospel of Climate Skepticism: Why Evangelical Christians Oppose Action on Climate Change*. Oakland, CA: University of California Press, 2019.

²² Kenneth L. Gentry, *The Greatness of the Great Commission: The Christian Enterprise in a Fallen World* (Tyler, TX: Institute for Christian Economics, 1990), x-xi.

existence, labeling their eschatology a distraction from evangelism and the establishing of the Kingdom.²³ In his often updated and revised *Last Days Madness* (1991), Gary DeMar aggressively upbraided evangelicals for their End Time interests stirred up by the Gulf War and observing with a bit of pessimism of his own that “sensationalism, not sound biblical study, sells.”²⁴ Gentry returned in 1992 with *He Shall Have Dominion*, considered by Gary North to be the most important anti-premillennial text since Allis's *Prophecy and the Church* (1969). In direct contrast to premillennialists' historical concerns over the environment, Gentry explained that the blessings reserved for the Church through “covenantal obedience” (installing biblical law and exercising dominion) included “population growth...agricultural abundance...favorable weather, and so forth.”²⁵ These were not obscure, esoteric works parsing minor theological issues. Leading premillennialists like Tim LaHaye would be continually publishing their own counterarguments throughout the decade as they watched ministry after ministry abandon the hope of the Rapture for Reconstructionist activism.²⁶

However, for all of the theological and denominational victories scored by Reconstructionists, popular culture remained infatuated with the drama of

²³ Gary North, *Millennialism and Social Theory* (Tyler, TX: Institute for Christian Economics, 1990), ix-xiii.

²⁴ Gary DeMar, *Last Days Madness: Obsession of the Modern Church*, fourth revised edition (Atlanta, GA: American Vision, 1999), 26.

²⁵ Kenneth L. Gentry, *He Shall Have Dominion: A Postmillennial Eschatology* (Tyler, TX: Institute for Christian Economics, 1992), 536-537.

²⁶ Tim LaHaye, *No Fear of the Storm: Why Christians Will Escape All the Tribulation* (Sisters, OR: Multnomah, 1992), 9.

dispensationalism and its cast of apocalyptic figures. Following the Gulf War, a series of dramatic predictions kept the topic fresh in the minds of even secular Americans. A Korean church made international news with its prediction that the Rapture would occur on October 28, 1992. Charles R. Taylor, a well-known California preacher, also predicted Christ's return in the fall of 1992. Harold Camping claimed to be "99.9% certain" that the Rapture would take place around September 6, 1994.²⁷

Even as such dates came and went, their failures did little to diminish Americans' overall appetite for bible prophecy. The collapse of the Soviet Union had little effect either as interest levels remained high enough for historian Paul Boyer to confidently predict that premillennialism would continue to thrive (with environmentalism replacing anti-communism) well into the next millennium. Boyer's prediction got off to a fast start as premillennial books continued to pour from the presses and NBC aired the first of its *Ancient Prophecies* series in 1994 featuring several leading premillennialists. (The producers paired their segment on the Book of Revelation with one predicting ecological collapse.) Public interest in such prophecies was so great that the network took extra precautions to avoid a "War of the Worlds panic" and reminded viewers that although the biblical scholars based many of their predictions on real data gathered by environmental scientists, such predictions remained articles of faith and were not the official

²⁷ B. J. Lee, "'Sorry, Let's Go Home': Miracle of the Rapture a No-Show in South Korea," *Atlanta Constitution* (October 29, 1992), A4; Charles R. Taylor, *Bible Prophecy News* (April-May-June, 1992). Taylor had also predicted that the Rapture would take place in 1976, 1980, 1988, 1989, and 1992; Harold Camping, *1994?* (New York, NY: Vintage Press, 1992), 444.

pronouncements of scientists.²⁸ The series would feature four primetime installments between 1994 and 1996. However, even this viewership would pale in comparison to the premillennial cultural phenomenon that would hit bookstores at that time and quickly go on to become one of the best-selling books series in all of history.

In 1995, Tim LaHaye and Jerry B. Jenkins' *Left Behind: A Novel of the Earth's Last Days* arrived in stores. Although both LaHaye and Jenkins had penned best-selling titles before, neither they nor their publisher Tyndale House expected the public response the book received as it brought the Rapture and dispensationalism further into the American cultural mainstream than it had ever been. Whereas Lindsey's *The Late Great Planet Earth* had been the best-selling non-fiction title of the 1970s, *Left Behind* would go on to become the best-selling fiction title of the 1990s—selling over 65 million copies across its titles. However, despite being a “novel of the Earth’s last days,” the Earth is almost entirely absent from the narrative LaHaye and Jenkins crafted—even as a backdrop. In stark contrast to virtually every other premillennial prophecy work—fictional or theological—the *Left Behind* series contains no commentary on the ecological destruction wrought by the Tribulation. (It is likely that Jenkins, given his preference for avoiding controversy in his fiction, likely served to temper many of LaHaye’s political views—which tended to reflect Reconstructionism more than premillennialism.) At no point do the believing characters stop to mourn the death of Creation as it is ravaged by plagues and judgements. Fiery hailstones, global earthquakes, blood-filled seas, poisoned

²⁸ John Carmody, “The TV Column,” *Washington Post* (April 12, 1994).

waters, and scorched forests are depicted with little sympathy. Aside from a single comment in the third novel by the Antichrist chiding environmentalists for opposing oil pipelines, the issue of environmentalism is entirely absent across the series' thirteen novels. The only outright hint that LaHaye had departed from certain traditional premillennial teachings was a description in the final book of the Creation being "obliterated by fire" before Christ creates "an entirely new earth" for the characters to enjoy for eternity.²⁹

The overwhelming popular success of the *Left Behind* series and as well as the scholarly attention its story has received from theologians and literary critics, however, has often obscured how LaHaye—the creator of the best-selling premillennial books of all time—diverged from traditional dispensationalism, especially in regards to politics. LaHaye's first prophetic book, *The Beginning of the End* (1972), had reflected such traditional views, embracing ecological concern and shunning subversive politics while telling readers that they were living in the final generation. LaHaye credited his hermeneutic to Dr. David L. Cooper, founder of the Biblical Research Society who taught him that "when the plain sense of Scripture makes common sense, seek no other sense."

²⁹ Tim LaHaye and Jerry B. Jenkins, *Left Behind: A Novel of the Earth's Last Days* (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 1995); Tim LaHaye and Jerry B. Jenkins, *Tribulation Force: The Continuing Drama of Those Left Behind* (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 1997), 127; Tim LaHaye and Jerry B. Jenkins, *Kingdom Come: The Final Victory* (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 2007), 352. Even across the multiple spin-off novel series inspired by *Left Behind*, discussions of the environment would be restricted to a brief description of the Antichrist as originally a nature-loving child and a theory by unbelieving scientist that long-term pollution, along with a "quantum events," had triggered the disappearance of millions in the Rapture. Tim LaHaye and Jerry B. Jenkins, *The Rising: The Antichrist is Born* (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 2005), 166; Neesa Hart, *End of State: Now All the Rules Have Changed* (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 2003), 185.

The Beginning of the End aligned all with style of premillennialism pioneered by Lindsey and Kirban. While not setting a date for Christ's return, LaHaye felt comfortable identifying July 1914 and the beginning of WWI as the date when the Earth's final apocalyptic "birth pangs" commenced. Since that time, not only had the rhythm of major earthquakes quickened, but the multiplying threats of "nuclear holocaust, world-wide famine, population saturation, interplanetary space travel, mysterious flying objects and international hostilities" had even the pragmatic minds insisting that such world conditions "demand a climax."³⁰ As was the common style of prophecy writers, he cited secular scientific authorities extensively. The World Bank warned of a population explosion. Economists warned that technology would not alleviate growing pressures. Ecologists warned that famine would kill millions while pollution finished off the rest. If humanity did not make drastic changes, LaHaye summarized, "we will smother earth life." All of which led to the question for readers: "Can you imagine the pollution is the present population doubled in thirty-five years?" he asked readers. Such impending ecological catastrophes left no doubt in LaHaye's mind as to the nearness of Christ's return, confidently declaring to readers that "we are the generation that will be on earth when our Lord comes."³¹ However, while LaHaye would continue to preach a dispensational style of premillennialism which emphasized the "any moment" return of

³⁰ Tim LaHaye, *The Beginning of the End* (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House, 1972), 7, 38-39.

³¹ LaHaye, *The Beginning of the End*, 171-172.

Christ, his political activity would soon come to be characterized by a much longer view of history.

While recognizing the potency of premillennialism for evangelism, LaHaye's activism from the mid-1970s onward took on a distinctively postmillennial, Reconstructionist tone. Through his connection with Morris and the Creation Science movement, LaHaye had received secondhand exposure to Reconstructionism, its presuppositionalism, and its battle against secular humanism. Thus LaHaye, much like Rushdoony, would become a leader in the battle for Christian schools, for interpreting American history through a providential lens, for opposing environmentalism, for battling secular humanism, and for preserving traditional marriage. Unlike Rushdoony, he would do so while ostensibly promoting premillennialism. One of the first signs of Reconstructionist influence on LaHaye's activism appeared in his 1976 book, *The Bible's Influence on American History*. While most prophecy writers at this time were deeply skeptical of the idea that the United States was an exceptional and providentially established nation—especially in light of its lack of a clear prophetic role in the End Times—LaHaye embraced such an interpretation. “Had there been no Bible, there would be no America as we know it today!” he wrote.³² The apparentness of the United States' downfall prior to the End Times gave men like Kirban and Schaeffer the confidence to criticize the nation's economic system and unequal distribution of wealth. LaHaye in contrast pointed to “brainwashed college students” and their professors as leading the

³² Tim LaHaye, *The Bible's Influence on American History* (San Diego, CA: Master Books, 1976), 2.

charge against capitalism and demanding a centralized economy.³³ In opposition to such forces, he proposed a lengthy plan of action that mirrored Rushdoony's early tactics in Duck Valley: beginning with the occupation of school boards and city councils by Christians. Such grassroots activism, along with the development of an evangelical television and press network, would enable the "largest voting bloc in America" to organize and elect politicians who would "lead our country back to the Biblical concepts...that built this once-great nation." While only four years earlier LaHaye had declared the present generation to be the last, now he encouraged "Bible-influenced patriots" to consider how "the next two hundred years, should Jesus tarry, could well depend on you!"³⁴

Despite confidently declaring in 1972 that Christians were living in the last generation, by 1980 LaHaye was offering political action plans for capturing the next century and beyond. That year he published the first installment of his *Battle* trilogy—*The Battle for the Mind* (1980). This would be followed by *The Battle for the Family* (1982) and *The Battle for the Public Schools* (1983). As historian Julie Ingersoll has noted, LaHaye's *Battle* books are based on Rushdoony's presuppositionalist critiques of secular humanism. *The Battle for the Mind* would be the first book by a dispensational

³³LaHaye, *The Bible's Influence on American History*, 43.

³⁴ LaHaye, *The Bible's Influence on American History*, 77-78, 80; The Reconstructionist influence on LaHaye's thinking was even more explicit in his 1983 *The Battle for the Public Schools*, in which LaHaye frequently cited multiple Rushdoony texts in his arguments. Tim LaHaye, *The Battle for the Public Schools* (Old Tappan, NJ: Fleming H. Revell, 1983), 285.

premillennialist that Reconstructionists agreed with and were eager to cite.³⁵ In it, LaHaye argued that there is “no prophetic requirement” that Christians, through their passivity and inaction, allow their nation to succumb to the moral conditions of the “Pre-Tribulation Tribulation” (those days of sin which will precede the Antichrist’s rule).³⁶

In an effort to resist this prophetically-avoidable moral decline, LaHaye founded the Council for National Policy in 1981—an organization whose membership would soon consist of hundreds of the wealthiest and most politically powerful conservatives in the country. (Rousas Rushdoony agreed to serve on LaHaye’s initial Board of Governors until—as he grew increasingly sour on partisan politics—stepping down a few years later.) The best explanation for LaHaye’s promotion of both premillennial dispensationalism and Reconstructionist-style politics comes from his 1986 book *The Race for the 21st Century*. In it, LaHaye highlighted several Reconstructionist causes including home-schooling, Young Earth Creationism, charismatic television evangelism, and political action based on a Christian revisionism understanding of history.³⁷ (When LaHaye outlined what America might look like if evangelicals came to dominate politics, noticeably absent was any mention of the environmental reforms that his fellow

³⁵ Julie J. Ingersoll, *Building God’s Kingdom: Inside the World of Christian Reconstruction* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2015), 22-23; Archie P. Jones, “The Imperative of Christian Action: Getting Involved as a Biblical Duty,” *Journal of Christian Reconstruction* 8, no. 1 (Summer, 1981), 144-145.

³⁶ Tim LaHaye, *The Battle for the Mind* (Old Tappan, NJ: Fleming H. Revell, 1980), 218.

³⁷ Tim LaHaye, *The Race for the 21st Century* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 1986), 24, 69, 73, 87.

premillennialists had pushed for.³⁸) Crucially, he noted that as the year 2000 approached, millennial fervor would inevitably increase. Under the heading “Second Millennium Hysteria,” LaHaye wrote that he emphatically did not believe that the year 2000 was apocalyptically relevant but that the excitement surrounding it would be very useful for winning converts. As he predicted that “the revival of this theory is likely to create a new wave of insecurity about the future, which will afford the church a golden opportunity to win sounds to Christ.”³⁹ In a sense, LaHaye tipped his hand—premillennialism was a fantastic tool for evangelicalism and, once people were converted, they could then be directed into political action. With a tone that would have made Rushdoony proud, he wrote that “the future belongs to those who prepare for it vocationally, educationally, spiritually, and relationally.”⁴⁰

LaHaye’s comfort in partnering with Reconstructionists politically, however, did not extend to their efforts to eradicate premillennialism. Even in the midst of the Gulf War revival of prophetic interest, Tim LaHaye perceived that postmillennial efforts to roll

³⁸ LaHaye, *The Race for the 21st Century*, 120.

³⁹ LaHaye, *The Race for the 21st Century*, 186-187. LaHaye’s perception that premillennialism (especially as the year 2000 approached) would be a valuable tool for evangelism is not without evidence. Few, if any, pastors have reported seeing increased conversions due to a shift *away* from premillennialism and toward amillennial or postmillennial preaching. However, on the eve of the new millennium, Morris H. Chapman (president of the Southern Baptist Convention’s Executive Committee) told an interviewer that he had begun his pastoral career as an amillennialist and saw few converts as a result. Then, after hearing God tell him to preach the truth, he began a yearlong study of the Book of Revelation from a premillennial perspective and immediately saw “more baptisms than ever in the 100-year history of the church” there in Wichita Falls, TX. Debbie Moore, “Premillennialist View Drives Evangelism,” *Baptist Press* (October 5, 1999), <https://www.baptistpress.com/resource-library/news/premillennialist-view-drives-evangelism/>.

⁴⁰ LaHaye, *The Race for the 21st Century*, 8.

back belief in the pretribulational Rapture were threatening to push the doctrine out of the evangelical mainstream. Upon learning that yet another minister friend had given up some beliefs, he published *No Fear of the Storm: Why Christians Will Escape All The Tribulation* in 1992 and sought to counter attacks by Reconstructionists who, he wrote, “refused to accept the plain teachings of the Bible on the nature of the kingdom of God.”⁴¹ Many of those who had come under the sway of Reconstructionism while still maintaining their premillennialism had attempted to synthesize such teachings by adopting a post-tribulational view of the Rapture. For Reconstructionists, they knew that if they could not persuade evangelicals to fully abandon their premillennialism, the next best approach was to convince such believers that they would endure the Tribulation and remove the “any moment” expectation of Christ’s return which they saw as robbing evangelicals of their political activism. Along with his book, LaHaye would also establish the Pre-Trib Research Center in 1992 with Thomas Ice and thirty five other prophecy scholars.⁴² However, despite his early leadership in the organization, LaHaye would spend the majority of his time in the Washington D.C. offices of his political lobbying coalitions.

⁴¹ Tin LaHaye, *No Fear of the Storm: Why Christians Will Escape All the Tribulation* (Sisters, OR: Multnomah, 1992), 9, 193.

⁴² According to the Chalcedon Foundation, it was LaHaye’s decisions to establish the Pre-Trib Research Center—especially on the heels of the Coalition on Revival—that led to Rushdoony and LaHaye parting ways.

The Last Days of Premillennial Environmentalism

Even as LaHaye and Jenkins' *Left Behind* books were selling in the millions while saying nothing about the environment, other premillennialists in the 1990s were continuing to write with deep concern for the treatment of the Creation.⁴³ Selling in the hundreds of thousands as opposed to the tens of millions, Paul Meier's fictional *Millennium* series effectively combined premillennial theology with sympathy for the Earth in the midst of the Tribulation. Meier's narrative demonstrated how seamlessly human-induced pollution and divine judgement could be integrated. At one point writing "El Nino winds have caused drought from South America to Australia. Except for Israel, the whole world is experiencing the full judgment for corrupting the atmosphere."⁴⁴ The only real conflict between the believers and environmental activists comes when the latter protest against the Jewish reinstatement of animal sacrifices at the Temple.⁴⁵ The climax of the first novel comes with the renewal of the Earth following the Tribulation—a renewal in which the characters observe a visible energy coursing through the trees and exclaim, "The whole of creation is coming into its own!"⁴⁶ However, the environmental crisis was far more than just a fictional plot device for premillennialists. It loomed as potentially the

⁴³ Just a few years before the debut of the *Left Behind* novels, LaHaye had linked worsening weather patterns in Russia to God's judgement of the nation for its Communism. Tim LaHaye, "Will God Destroy Russia?," in William T. James, ed., *Storming Toward Armageddon: Essays in Apocalypse* (Green Forest, AR: New Leaf Press, 1992): 253-284.

⁴⁴ Paul D. Meier, *The Third Millennium: A Novel* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1993), 214.

⁴⁵ Meier, *The Third Millennium*, 24.

⁴⁶ Meier, *The Third Millennium*, 298.

greatest political and existential threat for evangelicals as the 1990s began. As acclaimed pastor Tony Campolo warned, “Sooner or later we will all get caught up in the environmental movement, because sooner or later we will all get hurt by what is happening to nature.”⁴⁷

David Allen Lewis’ *Prophecy 2000*, despite its somewhat sensational title, represented the most self-aware premillennial prophecy book in regards to Reconstructionism’s influence and its anti-environmentalism. Echoing the desperate warnings of David Hunt and Hal Lindsey in the late 1980s, Lewis saw evangelicalism as “engaged in the greatest theological battle it has ever faced, and the bottom line is eschatology.”⁴⁸ Both premillennialists and Deconstructionists understood that how one interpreted prophecy determined how one would act between the present and eternity. Still, despite the stakes, Lewis refused to lionize his own camp and candidly admitted that some *had* used premillennialism as “an excuse for their escapism, irresponsibility, and general weirdness.” However, far more premillennialists were “at the forefront of social action,” aiding in humanitarian work and “legitimate” (democratic) political action.⁴⁹ Lewis, an ordained Assemblies of God minister from Springfield, Missouri, had closely

⁴⁷ Tony Campolo, “Rescuing the Earth,” in David J. Gyerton, ed., *Salt & Light: A Christian Response to Current Issues* (Dallas, TX: Word Publishing, 1993), 219.

⁴⁸ Lewis, *Prophecy 2000*, 217. Lewis even went so far as to speculate that the Antichrist might end up being “a renegade Pentecostal or Charismatic miracle worker.” Lewis, *Prophecy 2000*, 285.

⁴⁹ Lewis, *Prophecy 2000*, 219, 236.

followed the infiltration of his charismatic denomination for years and foresaw what Reconstructionist theology was building toward:

For some Christian extremists 2000 is the portal to a future world featuring a church-run theocratic world government. It will not be necessary for Christ to return to bring this to pass. The Church will do it. Democracy will be abolished. Pluralism will no longer be tolerated. Many "incorrigibles" will simply have to be executed or imprisoned in detention camps in order to bring about this more perfect society. Dominionism is a revival of the postmillennial system launched by Rev. David Whitby in the 1700s.⁵⁰

Allen astutely observed that Reconstructionists' promotion of Dominion theology would inevitably lead to a harsh backlash against *all* evangelicals by the wider secular community as it increasingly came to recognize the threat which such postmillennial beliefs posed to their own freedoms. As the non-evangelical world "becomes more and more aware that the Dominionists and Reconstructionists are a real political threat," he wrote, "they will sponsor more and more concerted efforts to destroy the Evangelical church."⁵¹

While Allen promoted democratic, "legitimate" activism in contrast to Reconstructionists' more subversive plans, David Hunt's ongoing battle with the postmillennialists had, by the 1990s, pushed him toward the escapist fringe of premillennialism. He not only rejected the political ambitions of his opponents, but now preached that Christ's death "was not intended to set an example of noble ideals and self-

⁵⁰ Lewis, *Prophecy 2000*, 14.

⁵¹ Lewis, *Prophecy 2000*, 277.

sacrifice for the rest of us to follow as we attempt to avert ecological disaster.” While still warning that Reconstructionist-inspired Pentecostals may someday resort to violence and find themselves “working for Antichrist,” he now saw little hope for the Creation. In a clear departure from the traditional premillennial view that the present Earth would be divinely “recycled,” he now concluded that only annihilation awaited, that God “will destroy this doomed universe and create a new one.”⁵² However, a few years later, Hunt would return to his original ecological sensitivity, promoting an evangelical environmental ethic. Noting that, according to evolutionary theory, there is no qualitative difference between a volcano spewing greenhouse gases and a factory (both being the results of “natural” processes), he argued that the true difference lies in the fact that humans have a “higher origin” and thus the moral imperative to act as a stewards in maintaining ecological balance.⁵³

Similarly, Hal Lindsey’s premillennial environmentalism began to show the effects of Reconstructionist battles. While Lindsey rejected their overt attempts to control evangelicals, he found himself (perhaps even unconsciously) adopting more and more of

⁵² Dave Hunt, *How Close Are We? Compelling Evidence for the Soon Return of Christ* (Eugene, OR: Harvest House, 1993), 200, 303-305, 322-323; Unfortunately, amillennial mainstream evangelicals were having a difficult teasing apart the eschatologies of their more conservative counterparts. Likely confusing Reconstructionist activism and especially its survivalist ethos with the general End Times anticipation of premillennialists, two observers wrote a book in 1995 warning that some evangelicals were “becoming predisposed to act in abnormal and foolish ways and taking on heretical beliefs” due to their anticipation of a coming calamity. With a conclusion that appeared to confirm secular environmentalists’ worst fears, they wrote: “The consequences for fixating on Christ’s return can be severe.” C. Marvin Pate and Calvin B. Haines, Jr., *Doomsday Delusions: What’s Wrong with Prediction about the End of the World* (Downers Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity Press, 1995), 13.

⁵³ Hunt, *A Cup of Trembling*, 380-381.

Rushdoony's Christian revisionism into his discussions of the nation's history. In his 1994 book *Planet Earth—2000 A.D.*, he began with a jeremiad questioning “how did America, a nation founded on a bedrock of godly principles, go so far astray?”⁵⁴ Referencing the “Founding Fathers” for the first time in his prophetic works, he demanded respect for private property while calling the environmental movement “little more than a tool of the radical socialist extremists” and the “latest excuse to seize property.” He was especially disturbed by the “Declaration of Interdependence” published on the Fourth of July by an environmental group in 1990.⁵⁵ Others premillennialists held similarly cautious suspicions, such as John Barela who considered Nixon's EPA to be an example of how “right intentions can be perverted by government.” Daymond Duck believed that those busy assembling the environmental bureaucracy were good-hearted but “naive” and failed to realize how such institutions might become oppressive once the rapture removed all Christian influence from the world.⁵⁶

However, despite these suspicions, Lindsey still devoted multiple chapters of his prophecy book to exploring the reality and danger of the growing environmental crisis. Calling the crisis one of the most significant prophetic developments of the last twenty-five years, Lindsey pointed to unparalleled thunderstorms, abnormal snowfalls and

⁵⁴ Hal Lindsey, *Planet Earth—2000 A.D.: Will Mankind Survive?* (Palos Verdes, CA: Western Front, 1994), 12.

⁵⁵ Lindsey, *Planet Earth—2000 A.D.*, 13, 33-34, 47.

⁵⁶ John Barela, “Government: Of, By, and for Whom?,” in William T. James, ed., *Earth's Final Days: Essays in Apocalypse III* (Green Forest, AR: New Leaf Press, 1994), 140; Daymond R. Duck, *On the Brink: Easy-to-Understand-End-Time Bible Prophecy* (Lancaster, PA: Starburst Publishers, 1995), 107.

floods, the El Niño weather phenomenon, and the “well-documented” greenhouse effect as proof that the planet’s climate was rapidly changing. The reality of such changes was not in doubt for Lindsey as there was “no longer much debate in scientific circles” as to the role human-produced CO₂ was playing in such changes.⁵⁷ He cited scientists warning that the planet’s average temperature could rise by 8 degrees, but warned that even a rise of 1 degree would have “a devastating effect” on the world’s farm belts. Beyond the ability to feed the human population, a changing climate was leading to massive deforestation, the destruction of the ozone layer (Lindsey emphasized the “millions of hideous deaths by skin cancer” that would result from a fifteen percent reduction in the ozone layer), and the accelerating extinction of God’s creatures. Taking care repeatedly to assure that readers that he had not become “some kind of environmentalist wacko bent on destroying the free-enterprise system” and that he was still a committed, conservative evangelical, Lindsey emphasized the damage that climate change was wrecking upon both the Creation and the human refugees left in its wake. Ultimately, he predicted, there would only be three human responses to climate change: plagues, war, and famine.⁵⁸

For his part, Graham continued to update his decades-long message of premillennial environmentalism. His 1992 book *Storm Warning* contained several ecological portions that had previously appeared in *World Aflame* (1965) and *Approaching Hoofbeats* (1983), also several new sections. Graham now told readers of

⁵⁷ Lindsey, *Planet Earth—2000 A.D.*, 87-91.

⁵⁸ Lindsey, *Planet Earth—2000 A.D.*, 91-96, 121.

the “10 million environmental refugees” suffering from accelerating desertification and dying from lethal air conditions. “Each day a shocking 25,000 die from pollution alone,” he wrote.⁵⁹ Graham’s close friend John Wesley White also acknowledged the reality of climate change, but maintained a degree of optimism that advancing technology might offer solutions. White pointed to U.S. satellites that had observed the southward shifting of the Sahara Desert and reasoned that the ability to identify large-scale environmental trends from space would only enhance humanity’s ability to address them.⁶⁰

By the early 1990s, as environmentalism became increasingly politicized, premillennialists like Graham did express concern over some of the extraneous political and religious causes attempting to attach themselves to an otherwise legitimate movement. However, such associations did not lead premillennialists to turn their back on the Creation as it did Reconstructionists. Graham wrote that while “some extremists” were promoting environmentalism and attempting to transform it into a “dangerous form of idolatry,” this in no way should distract Christians from the “genuine problems.” Addressing such problems would require both political solutions as well as the spiritual grassroots transformation that evangelicalism excelled at:

We must take into consideration God's authentic purpose for this planet. We must be responsible stewards of the resources we have been given by God, and I believe we have gone too far too fast and put elements of the environment in

⁵⁹ Billy Graham, *Storm Warning* (Dallas, TX: Word Publishing, 1992), 225-226.

⁶⁰ John Wesley White, “The Great Physician’s RX for Mankind,” in William T. James, ed., *Earth’s Final Days: Essays in Apocalypse III* (Green Forest, AR: New Leaf Press, 1994), 327, 340.

jeopardy. I also believe we can accomplish much by discipline, resourcefulness, and prayer. The earth will not be saved by legislation or by compulsion alone, but by the responsible concern of men, women, and children who care for God's creation. If we do not, the pale horseman of death will march across our world.⁶¹

Calls to act permeated premillennialist writings during the 1990s. Allen believed that humanity might “plunge into extinction” by the year 2000 due to overpopulation, but called for Christian activism by saying that it was only sure to come if believers “live by the rule of fatalism, if we fail in our prayers and our tasks.”⁶² Another writer saw that the earth was already being trampled beneath the hooves of the apocalypse's Black Horse, writing that the greenhouse effect was exacerbating the problem of feeding the population and calling for the Church to “wake up! We are in it!”⁶³ Like Graham, other premillennialists were quick to write of both the reality of climate change and its devastating effects on the world's poorest. Writing that “something has gone wrong with the weather,” Campolo begged readers to consider how “the poor and the weak are suffering the consequences of the exploitation of nature”:

It is not right in the eyes of God that some people should live in such a way as to cause people in far and distant lands to suffer. If justice is to roll down for those

⁶¹ Graham, *Storm Warning*, 243-245; Other premillennialists were also beginning to raise their voices in concern over the growing connection between environmentalism and pagan idolatry. William T. James against Gaia worship and environmentalism's “frothy mixture of occultism, mythology, and fantasy that Mother Earth is the giver and sustainer of life.” William T. James, “It's Not Too Late,” in William T. James, ed., *Storming Toward Armageddon: Essays in Apocalypse* (Green Forest, AR: New Leaf Press, 1992), 322-323.

⁶² Lewis, *Prophecy 2000*, 7, 85.

⁶³ John F. Stocker, *God's Roadmap for the 90's* (Shippensburg, PA: Companion Press, 1991), 28.

who cannot defend themselves against the power of the rich nations of the earth, the people of God must try to put an end to this oppression.⁶⁴

Lewis saw such justice needed within every economic system, writing that “the greed mongers of the Capitalist, Socialist, and Communist nations have put an almost unbearable tax burden on humanity” and thus conditioned people for the Antichrist’s future tax-heavy regime. These “power mad super rich capitalists and Communists” were the ones preventing the transition from fossil fuels to cleaner energy sources according to Lewis: “Let the environment be damned, we will accumulate our dollars, dinar, yen, lira, and francs.”⁶⁵ Hindson pointed to Haiti and a tragic colonial past whereby “greedy men have stripped away the natural resources and left an environmental catastrophe in their selfish path.”⁶⁶

Where solutions were less simple, premillennialists continued to pass along the latest scientific reports of environmental degradation to their readers. The LaLonde brothers, Peter and Paul, reprinted the findings of the “World Scientists Warning to Humanity” report which was signed by 1,700 scientists and declared that the rapidly changing climate was proof that humans and the Creation were on a “collision course.” They connected this to the prophecy in Luke 21:25 describing “weird weather phenomena.” They also linked the growing hole in the ozone layer (which scientists reported had reached the size of Europe by the mid-1990s) to the angel of Revelation 16

⁶⁴ Campolo, “Rescuing the Earth,” 220, 222-223.

⁶⁵ Lewis, *Prophecy 2000*, 82, 91.

⁶⁶ Hindson, *Final Signs*, 90.

who poured out his vial on the sun, giving it the power to “scorch” men with heat and grievous sores.⁶⁷ Not that every premillennial report was backed by the most reputable science. Salem Kirban warned that the Earth’s survival depended on the ozone layer, but believed that it was a lack of oxygen in the atmosphere rather than chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs) that was responsible.⁶⁸ Hindson, however, agreed with the more scientific explanation that air pollution (including CFCs) was degrading the ozone layer and would soon lead to a scourge of cancers.⁶⁹ Even Henry Morris, the leading proponent of Young Earth Creationism, continued to agree more so with his fellow premillennialists on such issues than with his presuppositional Reconstructionist benefactors. “Even without the witness of the prophetic Scriptures,” he wrote, “we can know we are in the last days of Planet Earth, for it simply cannot survive much longer apart from divine intervention.” Offering eleven signs of Christ’s near return, Morris listed and discussed water pollution, air pollution, overpopulation, soil erosion, the destruction of the rain forests, species extinction, and synthetic chemical pollution.⁷⁰

Not only were premillennialists still more willing to listen to the scientific consensus of the day than Reconstructionists were, they were also much more discerning in separating environmentalism from paganism. Like many premillennialists of the

⁶⁷ Peter LaLonde and Paul LaLonde, *301 Startling Proofs and Prophecies* (Niagara Falls, Canada: Prophecy Partners, 1996), 249-250.

⁶⁸ Salem Kirban, *What In The World Will Happen Next?* (Huntingdon Valley, PA: Salem Kirban, Inc., 1994), 152.

⁶⁹ Hindson, *Final Signs*, 89.

⁷⁰ Morris, *Creation and the Second Coming*, 127-129.

1980s, Lewis had scoured society for hints of New Age and pagan activity. However, when he published his findings in *Dark Angels of Light* (1985), they revealed no links between environmentalism and such influences.⁷¹ Even by the 1990s, where those like Hindson *did* find New Age activism, it was largely restricted to the political “Green movement” than environmentalism broadly.⁷² Tony Campolo prepared Christians for the reality to fully address environmental issues, “we will have to work with people outside the church and that means we will inevitably end up in dialogue with New Agers.” However, as long as believers were careful to develop a proper, biblical sense of *unity* with nature (a shared creatureliness) and avoid the idea of a *union* with nature, such partnerships should be not be feared.⁷³

Berit Kjos (a premillennialist, though one who adhered to a Post-Tribulational Rapture), offered the clearest example of how conservative evangelicals into the 1990s were able to delineate between legitimate, scientific environmentalism and pagan nature-worship. In her *Under the Spell of Mother Earth*, Kjos began with a warning to believers that “good environmental practices are mixing with the false philosophy of ‘The Earth is our Mother’...Witchcraft is masquerading as environmental spirituality.” However, she immediately followed this with an exhortation that readers “prayerfully consider how we

⁷¹ David Allen Lewis, *Dark Angels of Light* (Green Forest, AR: New Leaf Press, 1985).

⁷² Hindson, *Final Signs*, 96.

⁷³ Campolo, “Rescuing the Earth,” 228-229.

have misused the environment” before directing them to a list of ecological family projects they could undertake to “save the environment God’s way.”⁷⁴

Kjos warned that recovering a biblical appreciation for Creation would be a spiritually and politically freighted task—one that would lead believers to reconsider those with whom they might partner in surprising ways. In fascinating personal example, Kjos recounted a hike she had recently taken among the California redwoods and an encounter she had there on the forest trail with a woman who identified as a lesbian witch. However, despite being “poles apart spiritually,” she was struck by how:

...a love for nature a desire for simplicity had brought us together...I continued to hear—and appreciate—this woman’s deep concern for the well-being of the earth, its animals, the homeless, and the poverty stricken children in her classroom. Was I as willing to serve His hurting ones?⁷⁵

For Kjos, preserving the Creation was a crucial component for evangelizing. Neglecting the Creation not only meant the forfeiting of “a great opportunity to be witnesses before the people of the world,” but also that evangelicals should not be surprised when non-believers “turn to false gods like the earth Goddess if we do not ourselves live in obedience to the one true God as faithful tenders of the earth.” Other premillennialists echoed Kjos’ point. Campolo believed that Christian apathy was leading

⁷⁴ Berit Kjos, *Under the Spell of Mother Earth* (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1992), 5.

⁷⁵ Kjos, *Under the Spell of Mother Earth*, 28-29. While Kjos’ appendix listing environmental organizations identified only one that “consistently maintains a biblical perspective on environmental issues” (the Christian Nature Federation), she still include the full contact information for readers of even the most radical groups such Earth First! and the Sea Shepherd Conservation Society. Kjos, *Under the Spell of Mother Earth*, 176-182.

God to use secular groups like Greenpeace and the Sierra Club to “carry our his renewal plan for our small planet” and warned that the Church must quickly take up it ecological tasks “lest the privilege of doing them be taken from us.”⁷⁶

Additionally, Kjos contended that the scientific debates some were concerning themselves with were irrelevant given “it should not be necessary to ‘prove’ a dire, earth-threatening cataclysm to convince us that pollution and waste are not aspects of good stewardship.”⁷⁷ However, adopting such a stewardship lifestyle might lead believers to question some of the political affiliations that were drawing close to evangelicalism:

One of the problems of conservative Christians identifying with conservative politics, capitalism, and a free-market economy is that we often tend to sanctify consumerism. We are prone to believe that every time an environmentalist suggests that we alter our lifestyles to become less consumption oriented, it is tantamount to treason and un-American...It is likely that truly living like a Christian might actually be ‘un-American.’⁷⁸

The culmination of these ecological concerns for premillennialists remained their conviction that the present world would someday be “recycled” (as Lindsey had put it). Whereas LaHaye and Hunt had, largely as a result of their encounters with Reconstructionism, succumbed to the environmentally pessimistic belief that the Creation would be annihilated rather than redeemed, the majority of premillennialists continued to hold to the traditional view. Kirban maintained hope that despite humanity’s poor

⁷⁶ Campolo, “Rescuing the Earth,” 231.

⁷⁷ Kjos, *Under the Spell of Mother Earth*, 167-169.

⁷⁸ Kjos, *Under the Spell of Mother Earth*, 165.

stewardship, “this earth will be purified” following the apocalypse. He issued a gentle rebuke of what he saw as rampant prophetic illiteracy among evangelicals who did not know that God had promised to renew, not destroy, the Earth.⁷⁹ Rexella Van Impe preached that one of the most effective ways to “get close to God” was to get closer to nature and offered a prayer for Creation: “At times I can almost hear the voices of nature saying, ‘Release us from the pollution that is surrounding us right now. Restore us, Creator, come back to us!’”⁸⁰ This sense of hope and sensitivity toward the groanings of Creation help to explain why organized efforts to create a distinctly evangelical environmental movement—though originating from the moderate and even progressive branches of evangelicalism—found support from even conservative evangelicals in the mid-1990s.

Environmental support ran so high among premillennialists in the first years of the 1990s that some, like dispensationalist William Badke, sought to write their own eco-theologies as Schaeffer had done two decades earlier *Pollution and the Death of Man*. For Badke, a professor at Northwest Baptist Theological College, the coming Tribulation was no excuse to abandon the God-given mandate to care for the Creation. Even if such efforts only “for a few moments, cause [the Creation] to flower in honor of the One who made it...to make it blaze with glory just once more, before the night falls," that should

⁷⁹ Kirban, *What In The World Will Happen Next?*, 152, 154.

⁸⁰ Rexella Van Impe, *That Mystery Called Life! Enlightening Lessons for Successful Christian Living* (Troy, MI: Jack Van Impe Ministries, 1990), 37-38.

be sufficient for the Christian environmentalist.⁸¹ Some reviewers faulted Badke for projecting a sense of fatalism, but these overlooked his deviation from the traditional premillennial hope in the Earth's ultimate renewal. For Badke, the end of the Millennium would see the "uncreation of the earth." Unlike the redemption, recycling, and renewal preached by prophecy writers, Badke simply wrote: "The planet will die."⁸²

The Amillennial Strand of Evangelical Environmentalism

While premillennial evangelicals across the second half of the twentieth century developed their own apocalyptically scientific environmentalism and postmillennialists continued their nationalistic project of anti-environmentalism, a small band of amillennialists had cultivated their own style of environmental activism which sought to add biblical ethics to progressive politics. Historians such as David Swartz and Melanie Gish have labeled this movement the "Moral Minority," though its development would be deeply entangled with the ecological attitudes of premillennialists and Reconstructionists. One of the earliest works in this vein came in 1954 when Joseph Sittler, an amillennial Lutheran theologian and popular lecturer, published "A Theology for Earth." Though, as Sittler grounded his work in soteriology and christology more so than eschatology or even cosmology, he saw his reasoning for a sacramental view of the Creation less as a

⁸¹ William B. Badke, *Project Earth: Preserving the World God Created* (Portland, OR: Multnomah Press, 1991), 154.

⁸² Badke, *Project Earth*, 95; As one reviewer wrote of *Project Earth*: "With friends like Badke, who needs Exxon or Saddam?" Randy Frame, "Defiler of the Earth," *Christianity Today* 35, no. 7 (June 24, 1991), 41.

“theology of nature” and rather an “incarnation theology applied to nature.”⁸³ By the early 1970s, opposition to premillennialism often appeared alongside skepticism of warnings by environmental scientists. Richard Hanson’s distaste for Lindsey’s sensational dispensationalism led him to also dismiss the scientists whom Lindsey cited. Richard Neuhaus of the ardently anti-premillennial Missouri Synod Lutherans felt similarly. For Neuhaus, American intellectuals were leveraging environmentalism to tap into an ethos of nihilism and shift attention away from their own failures to provide solutions to social problems involving race and poverty.⁸⁴

Still other environmentally-concerned amillennialists failed to fit cleanly into such a “Moral Minority” framing. Henlee H. Barnette was a radically liberal evangelical who marched with MLK, met with Khrushchev, endured FBI surveillance, and was eulogized as “eccentric to a fault”—all while serving as a professor of Christian ethics at the conservative Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. Barnette took the population explosion seriously, saying the world was in the midst of a “birthquake” and that it was likely that “in the long run sexual energy is a greater threat to making than nuclear energy.”⁸⁵ However, unlike his premillennial counterparts in the 1970s, Barnette was exceptionally critical of increased access to abortions, writing that the United States was

⁸³ Joseph Sittler, Jr., “A Theology for Earth,” *The Christian Scholar* 37, no. 3 (September, 1954); Bruce Allen Heggen, “A Theology for Earth: Nature and Grace in the Thought of Joseph Sittler,” Ph.D. dissertation, University of Chicago, 1995.

⁸⁴ Richard Neuhaus, *In Defense of People: Ecology and the Seduction of Radicalism* (New York, NY: MacMillan, 1971), 69-71.

⁸⁵ Henlee H. Barnette, *Crucial Problems in Christian Perspective* (Philadelphia, PA: Westminster Press, 1970), 82.

in the “throes of an abortion epidemic” and grimly predicting that “do-it-yourself” abortion medications would soon be widely available. He identified a range of contributing factors to the ecological crisis including anthropocentrism, technology, consumerism, and overpopulation. For Barnette, such ecological problems could not be solved “by science alone” as the only hope for staving off disaster lay in developing a sacramental view of Creation based on *agape* (“Christian love”).⁸⁶ He also was not afraid to lean into premillennial rhetoric, writing that failure to take drastic action would only “hasten the day of ecological Armageddon.”⁸⁷ By 1972, he was disturbed by how quickly Americans had moved on from the activism of Earth Day, though he presciently recognized that those representing the interests of big business were already “seeking to discredit the findings of the ecologists and other scientists.”⁸⁸

Whereas premillennial environmental remained a largely grassroots sentiment which predisposed conservative evangelicals to listen to the latest reports from scientists and to support federal legislation to protect air, water, and endangered species, amillennial activists in the 1970s made serious attempts at crafting an organized movement. In 1973, a broad coalition of forty evangelical leaders led by the progressive Ron Sider, but including premillennialists like Frank Gaebelin and Carl F. H. Henry,

⁸⁶ Barnette, *Crucial Problems in Christian Perspective*, 91, 93.

⁸⁷ Henlee H. Barnett, *The Church and the Ecological Crisis* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1972), 61, 83; See also Barnette’s seminary colleague Eric C. Rust whose *Nature—Garden or Desert?* (Waco, TX: Word Books, 1971) concluded a series of theological works examining the relationship between the Christian faith and the scientific understanding of the Creation with an emphasis on eschatology and ecology.

⁸⁸ Barnett, *The Church and the Ecological Crisis*, 23, 61.

signed "The Chicago Declaration." With a heavy emphasis on "simple living," the Declaration included among its goals the conviction that Christians "must attack the materialism of our culture" and unjust forms of international trade with consideration for their "billion hungry neighbors."⁸⁹ Sider expanded on his simple living philosophy in 1977 with his influential *Rich Christians in an Age of Hunger*—a book that aroused a measure of curiosity among premillennialist and sustained contempt and attacks from Reconstructionists. Sider's book, while devoid of eschatology, actually echoed many things premillennialists had been saying since the late 1960s—that overpopulation, famine, and pollution were creating apocalyptic conditions and that the luxuriant standard of living in the United States was contributing disproportionately to the growing crisis.⁹⁰ The following year, Sider launched his Evangelicals for Social Action as a national organization and struck at the heart of a growing problem—telling *Christianity Today* that too many evangelicals have "mixed their zeal for building the Kingdom of God with a narrow and uncritical allegiance to partisan political goals." His ESA's "Call to Responsible Christian Action" included a vision of stewardship not unlike that promoted by Francis Schaeffer and other premillennialists:

God has appointed us to be stewards of his creation, even though it is presently marred by sin. We are to care for our physical environment in as loving and

⁸⁹ Thanksgiving Workshop on Evangelicals and Social Concerns, "A Declaration of Evangelical Social Concern," Ronald J. Sider, ed., *The Chicago Declaration* (Carol Stream, IL: Creation House, 1974), 1-2.

⁹⁰ Ronald J. Sider, *Rich Christians In An Age Of Hunger: A Biblical Study* (New York, NY: Paulist Press, 1977), 16-23.

responsible a fashion as possible because it belongs to him. Biblical teaching on justice summons us to work against the individualistic, materialistic idolatry of our age, which has led both to despoilation and depletion of God's creation and to an unjust distribution of wealth, power, and income within our country and among the nations of the world.⁹¹

While many amillennial evangelical activists often expressed frustration at the popular success of dispensationalism, premillennialists were often content to coexist with amillennialists.⁹² Not so for Reconstructionists, who saw Sider as a danger to their Kingdom plans. Whereas Reconstructionists saw premillennialists as their antithetical rivals, Sider represented a different kind of threat as he derived most of his biblical ethics not from eschatology, but from the very same Old Testament laws which Reconstructionists presupposed. Drawing from biblical principles such as the Year of Jubilee (when debts were forgiven and property restored) and social programs designed to protect the poor, Sider occupied much of the same textual ground on which Reconstructionists built their support for free markets. By 1981, David Chilton had written his movement's polemical rebuttal to Sider: *Productive Christians in an Age of Guilt-Manipulators*. Chilton accused Sider of spreading a philosophy of "Christian socialism" and cast doubt on whether Sider actually *was* a Christian in the first place. When Sider did his best to avoid being drawn into a confrontation with Reconstructionists, Chilton simply continued to revise and republish his book, updating

⁹¹ "Stacking Sandbags against a Conservative Flood," *Christianity Today* 23, no. 25 (November 2, 1979), 76-77.

⁹² For premillennialists, it was typically the ecumenicism of amillennialists, not their eschatology, which they objected to.

its rebuttals for each new initiative launched by Sider and his ESA.⁹³ Gary North, who initially called Sider's program "warmed over Great Society rhetoric," grew increasingly angry when Sider proved "reluctant to discuss theology"—repeatedly sending certified letters demanding to know the specifics of Sider's theology. When his letters went unanswered, North published his institute's view of Sider:

We must conclude that Sider is not an evangelical, but someone who has assumed that label in order to get a hearing among those who consider themselves evangelicals. His ploy, it should be noted, has worked well. But his economics are not evangelical economics...It should be obvious that Sider's agenda is not that of Paul or Christ, but that of Marx or Shaw.⁹⁴

Unlike Sider's ESA, the Au Sable Institute at Calvin College was able to establish itself by the early 1980s as a voice for evangelical environmentalism without drawing fire from Reconstructionists. In 1977 while reading John 3:16, biologist Calvin DeWitt had an environmental epiphany and realized that the use of "world" (*kosmos*) referred to both humanity and the Creation.⁹⁵ Later that year he, along with philosopher Loren Wilkinson, began researching what an evangelical approach to environmentalism might look like and in 1979 the pair founded the Au Sable Institute of Environmental Studies. By 1980 the

⁹³ David Chilton, *Productive Christians in an Age of Guilt-Manipulators: A Biblical Response to Ronald J. Sider*, revised third edition (Tyler, TX: Institute for Christian Economics, 1985), 7-9

⁹⁴ Gary North, "Editor's Introduction," *Journal of Christian Reconstruction* 8, no. 1 (Summer, 1981), 2; Gary North, "Ronald Sider: *Contra Deum*," *Biblical Economics Today* 5, no. 2 (April-May, 1982), 2-3.

⁹⁵ Randy Frame, "Greening of the Gospel?" *Christianity Today* 40, no. 13 (November 11, 1996), 82.

Calvin College research group had published its findings in *Earthkeeping: Christian Stewardship of Natural Resources*—which David Larsen has called the “most clearly defined evangelical environmental theology of the 1980s.”⁹⁶ Although Reformed in their theology (as are Reconstructionists), DeWitt and his colleagues generally rejected postmillennialism and harbored no intentions of instituting theonomy. They also gave little consideration to premillennialism, questioning whether Romans 8:19-22 actually reserves the redemption of Creation for “some far future millennial kingdom” and building their eco-theology squarely on cosmology rather than prophecy.⁹⁷ Even still, historian Melanie Gish sees the influence of one particular premillennialist in their work, describing *Earthkeeping* as an expansion of “Francis Schaeffer's ecotheological proposal with a more nonutilitarian understanding of nature, a concern with the health of the entire planet, and with an emphasis on ‘human-subduing-which-is-service.’”⁹⁸

Institutional Support for Evangelical Environmentalism Grows

At an institutional level, as the 1990s approached, even those denominations and schools which embraced premillennialism remained highly receptive to the kind of organized environmental work being attempted by amillennialists like Sider and the Au

⁹⁶ David Kenneth Larsen, “God’s Gardeners: American Protestant Evangelicals Confront Environmentalism, 1967-2000,” (Ph.D. diss., University of Chicago, 2001), 249.

⁹⁷ Loren Wilkinson, *Earthkeeping: Christian Stewardship of Natural Resources* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1980), 291.

⁹⁸ Melanie Gish, *God’s Wounded World: American Evangelicalism and the Challenge of Environmentalism* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2020), 39.

Sable group. In 1988, the Church of God at its 62nd General Assembly approved an addition to its official teachings which clarified that the Dominion Mandate “does not, however, give us license to pollute our natural environment or to waste the resources of the earth.”⁹⁹ The National Association of Evangelicals issued a declaration titled “Stewardship: All for God’s Glory” in 1990 to wide support.¹⁰⁰ Even in Moral Majority strongholds like Falwell’s Liberty University, environmental activism was taking root. Liberty students organized a “Friends of the Earth” club intended to (as one member described it) help Christians “get their heads out of the sand and realize that the earth is being destroyed.” The group debated College Republicans and invited Al Gore to speak.¹⁰¹ The editor of the school paper wrote that most Christians seemed to resist environmental issues out of a preference for comfortable lives and promoted the collective effect of individual actions—noting that one person could not “reverse the Green house effect” or end acid rain, but that thousands on individuals decisions could force large corporations to “be more cautious toward the destruction of our world.”¹⁰² Anti-environmental perspectives did appear in the student paper, often cautioning

⁹⁹ “Supplement to the Minutes: Church of God Teachings,” in The Church of God, ed., *Minutes of the 62nd General Assembly of the Church of God* (Cleveland, TN: Church of God Publishing House, 1988), 21. The General Assembly has continued to affirm this teaching at its biannual meetings ever since.

¹⁰⁰ National Association of Evangelicals, “Stewardship: All for God’s Glory,” January 1, 1990, <https://www.nae.org/stewardship/>.

¹⁰¹ Curt W. Olson, “New Club Hopes To Promote Environmental Awareness,” *Liberty Champion* 7, no. 15 (February 14, 1990), 1.

¹⁰² “Christians Should Practice Environmental Stewardship,” *Liberty Champion* 7, no. 15 (February 14, 1990), 2.

students that scientists studying such issues had not “factually determined that these things even exist” and that while individual concern could be biblically appropriate, environmentalism “simply isn’t the apocalypse it has been proclaimed to be.”¹⁰³ However, Liberty students remained well aware of the larger political forces working to shape their views on the matter and some even raised voices in satirizing the rampant anti-environmentalism:

I understand that this is a conservative college—but it’s still a college. Nationwide, our age group is the one most likely to be committed to environment concerns...Here, it would seem, the student body would be happy is the world was turned into one parking lot...Since everyone knows God is a Republican and GOPsters are anti-environment, Christians are required to enjoy pollution. And since New Age wacky liberals have taken over with they Gaea theory, fundies don’t want nothing to do with the environment.¹⁰⁴

Proving that environmentalism was not solely a concern of evangelicalism’s progressive “Moral Minority,” the Southern Baptist Convention was eager to support the NEA’s declaration on stewardship and assist with organizing. The SBC’s support came as it was completing a decade-long “fundamentalist turn”—alternately referred to as the “fundamentalist takeover” by detractors and the “conservative reformation” by

¹⁰³ “Individual Concern Offers Real Solutions to Earth’s Problems,” *Liberty Champion* 8, no. 3 (September 11, 1990), 2; Another student would write that climate change was “purely speculative in nature.” Brent Trimble, “Greenhouse Effect Lacks Concrete Evidence; Blown Out of Proportion,” *Liberty Champion* 10, no. 6 (October 7, 1992), 7.

¹⁰⁴ Timothy J. Gibbons, “Students Are Dead Meat,” *Liberty Champion* 14, no. 7 (February 4, 1997), 5; Liberty students were also able to find the humor in dire environmental predictions, with one opinion editor writing of how the most likely response by school officials to the deteriorating ozone layer would be to enact even more modest dress codes. Kathleen Donohue, “Top Ten Countdown: Side Effects From The Growing Hole In The Ozone Layer,” *Liberty Champion* 8, no. 3 (September 11, 1990), 2.

supporters. In 1990, the denomination would lose nearly two thousand congregations as its more liberal churches broke away to form the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship. Even still, the SBC's *Light* newspaper and Richard Land, the president of the SBC's Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission and someone who would later come to serve as something of an antagonist to evangelical environmentalism, were initially thrilled to promote such efforts. When the SBC announced that the theme for its 1991 Christian Life Commission annual seminar would be "Christians and the Environment," Land helped to sound the call. "Planet Earth is endangered by land, sea and air pollution caused by human ignorance and irresponsibility," he wrote. The only question for Baptists was "whether we will engage the issue and aggressively join the debate, or whether we will continue to leave the field to a largely secular environmentalist movement."¹⁰⁵ Those planning the seminar acknowledged that some within the denomination had been hesitant to support environmentalism over fears of paganism, but urged members to consider how, "in neglecting this issue, we have done a disservice to ourselves." Lamar Cooper, an associate director for the commission, believed it was crucial that conservative Baptists "develop a sound theology of ecology and a plan to implement practical methods for improving the well-being of our planet and its people."¹⁰⁶

Speakers at the SBC's 1991 seminar preached that Christians failed in their duty when they left environmentalism to pagans. L. Russ Bush, a dean at Southern Baptist

¹⁰⁵ Richard D. Land, "Perspective: Think About It!" *Light* (April-June, 1990), 2.

¹⁰⁶ Lamar E. Cooper, "1991 Annual Seminar Focuses on Environment," *Light* (October-December, 1990), 7.

Theological Seminary, was careful to help listeners distinguish between pagan nature-worship and environmentalism: "We are not caring for nature as if the earth were our mother or as if the earth were our god. We are caring for our environment because God placed us here for that purpose even prior to sin." Gary Leazer, director of the Interfaith Witness Department at the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board, warned that the New Age Movement was the greatest threat to U.S. Christianity, but that pagans "put many Christians to shame" with their willingness to get involved and make sacrifices.¹⁰⁷ The SBC's 1992 seminar focused on Christian involvement in politics, but still included Senator Al Gore of Tennessee encouraging his fellow Southern Baptists to "continue to be active in the areas of the environment."¹⁰⁸

Evangelical environmentalism received an expected boost when scientist Carl Sagan issued a global call for leaders in both the scientific and religious communities to convene in response to the environmental crisis. Sagan appeal for "all people of faith to join together to save the planet and our children 'unto the seventh generation' from ecological catastrophe" found receptive ears and several evangelicals were in attendance

¹⁰⁷ Louis Moore and Tom Strode, "Seminar Speakers: New Age Dangers Must Not Sidetrack Earth Care Concern," *Light* (July-September, 1991), 4; Interest in the topic was great enough that the CLC published the seminar's speeches the following year in *The Earth is the Lord's: Christians and the Environment*.

¹⁰⁸ Louis Moore, "CLC Speakers Encourage Focus on Government," *Light* (May-June, 1992), 4-5; Gore himself would be associated with environmental paganism in the minds of many conservative evangelicals—with one premillennial writer calling him a "pantheist, devoutly calling for a return to goddess worship." (The writer, however, still championed the idea that all Christians should "seriously concerned about caring for the earth and protecting our environment.") John Barela, "The Mystics: Prophets or Psychics?," in William T. James, ed., *The Triumphant Return of Christ: Essays in Apocalypse II* (Green Forest, AR: New Leaf Press, 1993), 102.

when the assembly gathered in New York that June of 1991.¹⁰⁹ The meeting served to launch the Joint Appeal in Science and Religion (later renamed the National Religious Partnership for the Environment). Sagan’s “Joint Appeal” group met again the following May in Washington D.C. with Ron Sider (Evangelicals for Social Action), Robert Seiple (World Vision USA), and Calvin DeWitt (Au Sable) attending. Energized by this meeting and impressed by the urgency of leading environmental scientists (scientists whom premillennialists had been listening to for decades), DeWitt’s Au Sable Institute hosted a forum on evangelical environmentalism in partnership with the World Evangelical Fellowship soon afterwards. Out of this joint forum would come the International Evangelical Environmental Network and eventually the U.S.-based Evangelical Environmental Network. Evangelical flagships such as *Christianity Today* were proud to announce the EEN’s birth, declaring “the time has come for evangelicals to confront the environmental crisis.”¹¹⁰

The EEN wasted no time in setting to work. Officially launched on October 4, 1993, as part of a White House ceremony announcing the overarching National Religious Partnership for the Environment (NRPE), by October 28 the EEN was co-hosting a

¹⁰⁹ National Religious Partnership for the Environment, “Preserving and Cherishing the Earth: An Appeal for Joint Commitment in Science and Religion,” January, 1990, <https://fore.yale.edu/sites/default/files/files/Preserving%20and%20Cherishing%20the%20Earth.pdf>.

¹¹⁰ “It’s Not Easy Being Green,” *Christianity Today* 36, no. 6 (May 18, 1992), 14. The editors of *Christianity Today* had long since moved beyond the days of hesitantly reflecting on Lynn White’s charges. With the announcement of evangelicalism’s first major environmental organization—one that initially had the support of believers across the political spectrum—they openly declared the Bible to be the “greatest asset” of the environmental movement and celebrated evangelicalism’s history of activism.

symposium with *Christianity Today*. The EEN/*Christianity Today* symposium featured plenty of debate but ultimately settled on a position of accepting both that scientific consensus regarding climate change did exist and that environmentalism was not a pagan endeavor (as several high-ranking EPA officials were, in fact, devout evangelicals). On October 30, representatives from the EEN and *Christianity Today* jointly issued the *Evangelical Declaration of the Care of Creation*. By the end of 1994, the EEN had launched its own magazine, *Creation Care*, and had mailed out over 20,000 copies of *Let the Earth Be Glad: A Starter Kit for Evangelical Churches to Care for God's Creation*. (For comparison, the Catholic, mainline Protestant, and Jewish groups of the National Religious Partnership for the Environment mailed out resources to 53,000 congregations combined.) The EEN stepped directly into the political arena for the first time in October of 1995 after efforts began in Congress to roll back the Endangered Species Act. Calling the defense of the act the “Noah’s Ark of our day,” the EEN rallied evangelical support across denominational lines. On January 31, 1996, the EEN (led by Calvin DeWitt) joined other NRPE groups at the capitol, becoming something of a media sensation when their lobbying proved successful and efforts to roll back the act were defeated.¹¹¹

Reconstructionism: Declining Visibility, Growing Influence

As evangelicals, premillennial and amillennial alike, were mobilizing to join other religious communities’ organized responses to the environmental crisis, the

¹¹¹ Gish, *God's Wounded World*, 71-74.

postmillennial leaders at the core of Reconstructionism found themselves in crisis. In Vallecito, an aging Rushdoony struggled to maintain control over his Chalcedon Foundation and its publication *The Chalcedon Report*. Even more pressingly, the foundation's most reliable financial support—that of Howard Ahmanson, Jr.—had departed. The heir of the Home Savings family fortune, Ahmanson had served on the foundation's board of directors since the 1970s but now began to turn his attention and money elsewhere toward a younger generation of post-Reconstructionists who were less dogmatic and more politically savvy in their efforts to nudge the country toward the biblical principles Ahmanson favored. In Tyler, the situation was even more dire. In 1994 David Chilton, the movement's leading postmillennial thinking, suffered a massive heart attack and survived, but with a radical change in personality and theology. (His former Reconstructionist brethren would write their obituaries for him while he still lived, saying that the man they knew had died on the operating table.) In 1995 Greg Bahnsen, the movement's sharpest mind, died suddenly at age forty-seven. In 1997 Chilton succumbed to the effects of his heart attack and died at the age of forty-six. In the midst of their crumbling empires, Rushdoony and North agreed to a "truce," though they continued not to speak. Without new money and minds to shore up their losses, the Reconstructionist movement as it existed in Vallecito and Tyler would soon be, in the eyes of historian Molly Worthen, "largely dead." In Worthen's diagnosis, the cause of death was straightforward: "Riven by internal schism, a distaste for politics or compromise, and an

utter disdain for anyone who dared disagree, the movement imploded in the mid-1990s.”¹¹²

With the shattering of the Reconstruction movement came a new lease on life for the ideas which Reconstructionists had developed and promoted. As men like Rushdoony and North receded into the margins of evangelicalism, their projects of Young Earth Creationism, Christian America revisionism, and anti-paganism became entrenched within the evangelical mainstream. Now relieved of politically fraught associations with controversial Reconstructionists, such ideas spread even into the premillennial branches of the faith. Mary Pride, now well-established as one of the most influential voices in all of Christian homeschooling, openly promoted Reconstructionist ideas and their attendant anti-environmentalism. In 1990, Pride published her own original children’s book, *The*

¹¹² Gary North, “Rumor #213: Rushdoony Has Gone Unitarian,” *The Christian News* (August 1, 1994), 20; Gary North, “My Obituary of David Chilton—Three Days Before He Died,” (March 4, 1997), <https://www.garynorth.com/public/15703.cfm>. Chilton had publicly denounced North as a dangerous individual in 1987 on a PBS special with Bill Moyers. It would only be after narrowly surviving his heart attack that Chilton would publicly renounce his Reconstructionist views such as postmillennialism; Molly Worthen, “The Chalcedon Problem: Rousas John Rushdoony and the Origins of Christian Reconstructionism,” *Church History* 77, no. 2 (June, 2008), 435; It is worth noting that other factors which undercut Reconstructionists’ overt influence by the mid-1990s were the result of their own deregulation impulses and telecommunication technophilia. The 1987 abolishing of the Fairness Doctrine opened up the nation’s radio waves to hyper-partisan stations while the perfecting of FM broadcasting drew popular music to its frequencies, leaving the AM channel open for the proliferation of conservative talk radio. By the mid-1990s, conservative Christian voters were tuning in to hear Rush Limbaugh more than Pat Robertson’s *700 Club*. Additionally, the Telecommunications Act of 1996 regulated the television air waves, paving the way for more partisan options such as FOX News and furthering eroding the prize that had been the charismatic telecommunication satellites. The editors at FOX News would soon be taking marching orders from the conservative politicians—not the Coalition on Revival or a small band of theocratic guerrillas from Texas. The dramatic proliferation of the internet would be another factor in reducing the media empires of televangelists to niche broadcasts. Thus, by the middle of the decade, conservative religious voters were now imbibing those vehicles originally designed for transmitting Reconstructionism—Anti-Public Schoolism, Young Earth Creationism, Christian America Revisionism, Anti-Paganism—but from sources that largely divorced such ideas from their underpinnings of presuppositionalism, postmillennialism, and biblical law.

Greenie—a Reconstructionist adaptation of the popular Dr. Seuss tale *The Lorax*. In Pride’s telling, the one who “speaks for the trees” is a radical environmentalist who closes the beaches, outlaws meat, and confiscates everyone’s leather shoes. In the end, the *Greenie* collapses, exhausted from yelling at others and sick from jet fumes inhaled while flying to and from environmental conferences. The moral of the story arrives with the father who tells his children: “If you want protect some place, go out and buy it!”¹¹³

By this point, Pride’s *Big Book* series had become one of the most widely-read Christian homeschooling resources and one of the movement’s most anti-environmental. In *The Big Book of Home Learning: Volume 3: Teen & Adult* (1991), Pride launched a series of full-throated attacks on anything and everything associated with environmentalism. Pride utterly rejected the core premise of ecology—the interconnectedness of living organisms. “We are not as interdependent as all that,” she wrote, “The sins of one nation do *not* affect the climate of the next.” Therefore, she claimed that ecology was “inexact and should not really count as a science” and actually functioned more so as “just another excuse for government bureaucrats to jerk us all around” and “simply a bigger and greener type of communism.” Moving on to the spiritual realm, environmentalism was not just a political scheme, but “a religion”—and one in which “virtually *every* environmental tenet is counter to Scripture.”

¹¹³ Mary Pride, *The Greenie* (Brentwood, TN: Wolgemuth & Hyatt, 1990). Vic Lockman, the acclaimed Disney artist and a disciple of Rushdoony, illustrated *The Greenie*. Lockman would eventually be arrested and sentenced to three years in prison for counterfeiting in an attempt to further the Patriot Movement. Michael R. Gilstrap referred to Lockman as “something of an uncle in the Christian Reconstruction movement.” Michael R. Gilstrap, “Citizen’s Paralegal Litigation Tactics,” in Gary North, ed., *Tactics of Christian Resistance* (Tyler, TX: Geneva Divinity School Press, 1983), 237-238.

Environmentalism, she told parents, “ultimately leads, and will lead, right back to Earth-worship. Paganism. Brother Baal and Mother Astarte.” She even went so far as to compare environmentalists with premillennialists, noting that environmentalists’ use of “The End is Near Prophecy” often provided the “eschatological energy to force us into accepting radical changes in our laws and freedoms.” Such concerns flowed both ways and she warned parents to watch out for even Christian home-school publishers who were incorporating environmental concern into their textbooks.¹¹⁴

Along with Pride, other authors for her popular *Practical Homeschooling* magazine also promoted the same economy-over-ecology viewpoints that had passed from Julian Simon through Rushdoony to the broader Christian homeschooling movement.¹¹⁵ Jason Makansi, a chemical engineer with decades in the electrical industry, wrote sympathetically to parents who felt “overwhelmed by environmental issues - global warming, acid rain, electromagnetic fields, smog, hazardous waste, radon, asbestos, the ozone hole, and so on.” Makansi promised that despite the multi-dimensional nature of environmentalism, anyone who followed his simple rules would understand the issue “a

¹¹⁴ Mary Pride, *The Big Book of Homeschool Learning: Volume 3: Teen & Adult* (Wheaton IL: Crossway Books, 1991), 141-144; Pride’s support of free-market capitalism also had its limits as she warned textbook-buying parents that the movement’s popularity by the mid-1990s was attracting secular publishers looking to “aggressively market their secular educational titles to homeschoolers.” In stark contrast to her views on the environment, she wrote: “Where there’s a market, there will be those tempted to exploit it. Homeschooling is no different.” Mary Pride, “Homeschooling Invaded by Marketers,” *Practical Homeschooling* 10 (1995).

¹¹⁵ It should be noted that despite Rushdoony’s seeming insensitivity toward the Creation, he did still maintain a respect for it. As Pride and others were beginning to overtly oppose environmentalism, Rushdoony was issuing a warning that “to despise the physical creation is to despise God.” Rousas J. Rushdoony, *Systematic Theology In Two Volumes* (Vallecito, CA: Ross House Books, 1994), 957.

whole lot better than the talking heads on television.” His simple rule was that of scale—that the large amounts of waste and pollution produced by industrial sources in reality were only a small, unavoidable outcome. He asked students to consider if recent ocean oil spills—when viewed in terms of scale—are “really such an environmental disaster, or are the thousands of pictures, video films, and clipping carried by the news media around the world simply making it a big deal? Should that company really be subjected to hundreds of millions of lawyer fees?”¹¹⁶ Similarly to Rushdoony, Makansi’s anti-environmentalism stemmed from his opposition to “Government Alphabet Soup” and bureaucratic expansion. Calling the Nuclear Regulatory Commission “excessive and a waste of people and money,” he warned homeschooling parents of how “politics infects the scientific process” and directed parents to the Heritage Foundation for easy-to-read appraisals of various government agencies and “a microscopic view of how taxpayer money is spent.”¹¹⁷

Pride’s network also served to promote a resistance to scientific consensus. Ken Ham, a tireless promoter of Young Earth Creationism, also wrote for *Practical Homeschooling*. Taking up the presuppositionalism of the Reconstructionists and questioning the supposedly settled nature of scientific consensus, he warned that

¹¹⁶ Jason Makansi, “Thinking Like A Scientist,” *Practical Homeschooling* 14 (1996). From 1990 to 1996, Makansi self-published a newsletter titled *Common Sense on Energy and Our Environment*.

¹¹⁷ Jason Makansi, “Government Alphabet Soup: No Free Lunch,” *Practical Homeschooling* 18 (1997). Makansi cited the cost of National Acid Precipitation Assessment Program as a \$500 million burden on taxpayers and argued that Congress had passed the Clean Air Act of 1990 prior to the program’s final report and included legislation which contradicted some of the report’s findings.

“evolutionary educational elites” were busy writing textbooks designed to pass off “falsehoods as valid science” based on misguided observations. The only solution for resisting such falsehoods was to build one’s curriculum on “Biblically sound resources.” Sounding very much like Rushdoony, he wrote to parents that the goal of Christian homeschooling was to “train the next generation to mature into godly men and women—embracing a Christian worldview about everything.” Ham’s belief that science must start with the Bible rather than human observation was nothing new. Many homeschooling parents were already in agreement. As one mother wrote: “In home education we must come to terms with how to teach God's view of science and not what man has decreed. My goal in teaching science in our homeschool is not so much experiments and mechanics but the why of God's world. I try to concentrate on what proves God to be the Author and Creator and what disproves the skeptics.”¹¹⁸

While premillennial prophecy writers were still adamant in promoting the warnings of environmental scientists and premillennial institutions were generally supportive of environmental activism, by the 1990s homeschool textbooks by premillennial publishers like Bob Jones University and A Beka Book were beginning to show signs of Reconstructionist influence. In stunning contrast to earlier Bob Jones

¹¹⁸ Ken Ham, “Is ‘Science Fiction’ In Your Curriculum?” *Practical Homeschooling* 36 (2000); Lori Harris, “An Introduction to Principle Approach Science,” *Practical Homeschooling* 16 (1997); Mary’s husband Bill would later echo many of Rushdoony’s concerns with modern scientific authority. He wrote that “some people treat science like their religion, with scientists as priests whose every pronouncement must be believed as if it came from an oracle.” He stressed to parents that many of the “current accepted theories of science are even now being hotly debated by contemporary scientists. Others will may be called into question in the future.” Bill Pride, “The Foundations of Science,” *Practical Homeschooling* 76 (2007).

University textbooks which has emphasized stewardship and challenged students to seriously consider the threats of pollution and overpopulation, the revised edition of *Life Science for Christian Schools* now presented such concerns as *anti-Christian* distractions.

In a section titled "Doomsday Ecology," the authors warned:

Some ecologists predict a horrible *doomsday* when man will destroy the earth by abusing the physical world...According to the doomsday ecologists, the large mass of people will pollute almost all the earth with wastes and poisons...humans will eventually become extinct...Some people have used doomsday stories to promote special interests...they use the threat of overpopulation to wrongly justify *abortion*...They also use the problems of pollution and the coming shortage of natural resources to promote the idea of 'turning back to nature.' Some even carry this idea to the extreme by saying that man should not use the earth's natural resources at all.¹¹⁹

Even the more moderate approach of "conservation" raised flags for the authors who described the idea as one which "some people have taken to an extreme." Attempting to salvage some measure of balance, they included an image of a forest ravaged by acid rain and conclude that Christians "should not completely avoid using the earth's natural resources, but neither should they abuse them."¹²⁰

¹¹⁹ William S. Pinkston, Jr. and David R. Anderson, *Life Science for Christian Schools*, second edition (Greenville, SC: Bob Jones University Press, 1997), 373. A few premillennial prophecy popularizers during this time also drew connections between laws protecting the environment and those permitting abortion, but examples are scarce. See William T. James, "The Revisionists: Changing Truth in Lies," in William T. James, ed., *The Triumphant Return of Christ: Essays in Apocalypse II* (Green Forest, AR: New Leaf Press, 1993): 58-59; J. R. Church, "How Near Is the Mark of the Beast?," in William T. James, ed., *Earth's Final Days: Essays in Apocalypse III* (Green Forest, AR: New Leaf Press, 1994), 288-289.

¹²⁰ Pinkston, Jr. and Anderson, *Life Science for Christian Schools*, 374 & 380.

Going even further than Bob Jones University, by the mid-1990s A Beka Book science textbooks had entrenched themselves in opposition to environmental activism. The teacher's guide for *Science of the Physical Creation* assured parents that the textbook "highlights myths of the environmental movement and exposes its radical agenda."¹²¹ In the textbook, the authors downplay the seriousness of ozone depletion, question whether the CFC ban was economically justified, and minimize human contributions to the hole. They conclude that the Montreal-London Protocol "seems to have been based on hysteria, faulty science, and hasty conclusions." A few pages later, students read how "predictions of global warming are based on theory alone...All of the scientific evidence gathered indicates that there is no danger of a global warming disaster." It goes on to say that even if greenhouse gases were increasing, it would only benefit plant growth and Christians should rest assured that Genesis 8:22 promises that God will ensure regular seasons and that "the fate of the earth rests in the hands of its Creator."¹²² Another science textbook downplayed the issue of acid rain and urged students to contact their representatives over bills like the Clean Air Act of 1990 and its \$40 billion price tag. It referred to both the thinning ozone layer and any fluctuations in the atmosphere's greenhouse effect to be natural processes given that "the amount of greenhouse gases produced by industrial processes is very small." In its strongest statement, students read:

¹²¹ Gregory Parker, *Teacher Guide for Science of the Physical Creation*, 2nd edition (Pensacola, FL: A Beka Book Publications, 1996), v.

¹²² DeWitt Steele and Gregory Parker, *Science of the Physical Creation*, 2nd edition (Pensacola, FL: A Beka Book Publications, 1996), 28-29, 35-36.

“According to records kept over the past 100 years...there has been no global warming.”¹²³

A Beka Book reinforced these anti-environmental positions through their history textbooks as well. In the style of Rushdoony’ Christian America revisionism, their *United States History in Christian Perspective: Heritage of Freedom* now taught students that it was because “superstition kept the Indians from working together to develop the land” that the North American continent remained “an untamed wilderness until the Europeans arrived.”¹²⁴ Whereas A Beka Book science textbooks of the 1980s had stressed the limited availability of fossil fuels and told students that the energy source could very well be drained by the early 2000s, now their history textbooks offered a new perspective on the oil crisis: “In spite of environmentalist propaganda, the steep increase in the price of oil had nothing to do with a global shortage of fossil fuels. It was the greed of the OPEC oil cartel...” These downplayed the Three Mile Island disaster as “a sensationalized media event that was used to support the environmentalist agenda”—the same agenda

¹²³ Laurel Hicks, et al., *Science: Order & Reality*, 2nd edition (Pensacola, FL: A Beka Book Publications, 1993), 20, 166-167; For their part, premillennial educators at Christian colleges continued to teach ecologically sensitive curriculum. R. S. Beal, Jr., a biology professor at Colorado Christian University, proudly identified as both a premillennialist and an environmentalist: “There are probably few more convinced premillennialists than I, yet few who are more personally distressed by the continuing wholesale ravaging of creation by developers, recreationalists, industrialists, logging, cattle and mining interests, and many others...Perhaps I have not raised my voice as loudly as I might have, but in my biology classes I have constantly sought to instill in students a sense of enlightened Christian responsibility toward the world God has made. Perhaps I do so in contradiction to my “religiously unnecessary and logically impossible” point of view. I simply may be inconsistent. But I do not think so.” R. S. Beal, Jr., “Can a Premillennialist Consistently Entertain a Concern for the Environment? A Rejoinder to Al Truesdale,” *Perspectives on Science and Christian Faith: Journal of the American Scientific Affiliation* 46 (September 1994): 173-78.

¹²⁴ Michael R. Lowman, George Thompson, and Kurt Grussendorf, *United States History in Christian Perspective: Heritage of Freedom* (Pensacola, FL: Beka Book Publications, 1996), 7.

sponsored by Al Gore and his “radical environmentalism.” As if written by the libertarian think tanks that had employed Rushdoony and North, A Beka Book taught students that the federal government was using the “extensive media coverage of the ‘environmental crisis’ to continue its policy of absolute control over land in the western United States.”¹²⁵

The Post-Reconstructionists: Larry Burkett

Whereas Pride carried forward many of Rushdoony’s anti-environmental ideas via the homeschooling movement, another figure would rise to prominence within evangelicalism and ensure that many of North’s ideas also found a wide audience. Larry Burkett is often remembered as the “Father of Christian Financial Advice”—the man most responsible for the “personal finances” aisles which began to rapidly appear across Christian bookstores in the 1990s—but few, even even among religious historians, have explored the Reconstructionist roots of his thinking.¹²⁶ Like many Reconstructionists, Burkett began his evangelical career in a premillennial ministry. After accepting Christ in 1972, he joined Campus Crusade for Christ as a financial counselor. At the same time, he began what he called “an intense study of what the Bible says about handling money” and in 1976 he left the premillennial, college-based ministry to launch his own advising

¹²⁵ Lowman, Thompson, and Grussendorf, *United States History in Christian Perspective*, 645, 670.

¹²⁶ Paul Maltby’s 2008 analysis of Christian anti-environmentalism came close to correcting this lacuna as he astutely recognized the tremendous influence that both Reconstructionists and Burkett have had on evangelicals’ attitudes toward environmentalism. However, his article drew only a tentative connection between Burkett and Reconstructionist influences. Paul Maltby, “Fundamentalist Dominion, Postmodern Ecology,” *Ethics and the Environment* 13, no. 2 (Fall, 2008), 120-121.

ministry, Christian Financial Concepts.¹²⁷ During his time of study into the biblical principles of economics, Burkett encountered the works of Gary North and began what would become lifelong friendships with men like Austin Pryor and Ron Blue who shared the Reconstructionists' commitment to applying biblical principles to every area of life (one might consider Pryor and Blue to be early "post-Reconstructionists").¹²⁸ In 1982, along with Blue, Burkett founded the National Christian Foundation, an organization that would soon become one of the largest non-profits in the United States and distribute over \$10 billion in grants. That same year, Burkett predicted that inflation caused by unchecked government spending and a "lack of individual financial discipline" was driving the country toward a "devastating money crisis." Like other Reconstructionists writing during that time, he advised readers to develop tight-knit communities rather than trying to stockpile sufficient resources individually.¹²⁹ Over the next decade, Burkett would continue to expand his financial advising ministry, producing radio programs that reached millions of listeners.

In 1991, Burkett published his best-known title, *The Coming Economic Earthquake*. Clearly inspired by Gary North and the survivalist ethos of Reconstructionist

¹²⁷ Larry Burkett, *Victory Over Debt: Rediscovering Financial Freedom* (Chicago, IL: Northfield Publishing, 1992), 218.

¹²⁸ These early "Christian financial advisors" enjoyed a reciprocal relationship with Reconstructionists as the two groups sought to apply biblical principles to economics. Advisors like Burkett, Pryor, and Blue tended to focus on the microeconomic (personal finance) aspects of the project while men like North and DeMar examined the broader macroeconomic aspects. Gary DeMar, *The Debate Over Christian Reconstruction* (Fort Worth, TX: Dominion Press; Atlanta, GA: American Vision Press, 1988), 24.

¹²⁹ Larry Burkett and William Proctor, *How To Prosper In The Underground Economy* (New York, NY: William Morrow and Company, 1982), 13-17.

catastrophism, Burkett based his prediction of an impending financial meltdown on both the Old Testament promise of national judgement found in Deuteronomy 28 (a favorite passage of Reconstructionists) and the economic works of Ludwig Von Mises. His distrust of environmentalism was already readily apparent by this time, as he cryptically passed along an encounter with an unnamed government informant who told him that the EPA was operating “in the same role as the KGB in Russia...a paramilitary enforcement group running amuck.”¹³⁰ The financial crisis that Burkett predicted did not arrive, but *The Coming Economic Earthquake* sold over a half-million copies and served to dramatically increase Burkett’s influence over the evangelical mainstream.

Burkett’s next book, *What Ever Happened to the American Dream?* (1993), established him as one of the leading anti-environmental voices in evangelicalism. He opened his book with a warning to readers that he knew this would be his most controversial book precisely “because of the environmental issues.”¹³¹ In outlining the economic arguments for his anti-environmentalism, Burkett argued that the United States possessed neither a free-market or capitalist economy, but rather a “fascist economy” in which the government controlled the dealings of privately-owned businesses. The chief

¹³⁰ Larry Burkett, *The Coming Economic Earthquake* (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1991), 29, 179; Burkett would remain the primary mainstream evangelical voice promoting the Reconstructionist vision of economic catastrophe to a wide audience for much of the 1990s. One of the few voices to join him would be the premillennialist Grant Jeffreys, a moderately popular but obsessively conspiratorial prophecy writer. In 1996, Jeffrey would attempt to give believers “biblically based financial information that lays out a practical financial strategy for Christian to survive the difficult times that lie ahead.” Grant R. Jeffrey, *Final Warning: Economic Collapse and the Coming World Government* (Eugene, OR: Harvest House, 1996), 9-10.

¹³¹ Larry Burkett, *What Ever Happened to the American Dream?* (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1993), 7.

culprits in the creation of this fascist economy were those environmentalists who “make anyone who questions a new regulation seem like an earth-ravaging polluter.” These extremists were seeking total government control “from cradle to grave” and Burkett called upon Christians to oppose them or else “there will be no industry left in America.” Victory would not come easily, as he described the EPA as “a massive army of 125,000 bureaucrats” with powers that overshadowed even the IRS.¹³²

Moving on to the scientific justifications for his anti-environmentalism, Burkett (who had served in the Air Force and worked alongside the NASA space programs, but whose education was in marketing) challenged the scientific consensus regarding climate change. Burkett told readers that while he had initially assumed that some of the outcry was overblown, he was shocked to find that “virtually all of it is either exaggerated or non-existent!”¹³³ He faulted climate scientists for their reliance on evolutionary models depicting the Earth as billions of years old, favoring the Young Earth Creationism model instead. Global warming was thus not only a “myth,” but was physically impossible. “There is a self-leveling system built into our atmosphere,” he explained, “More CO2

¹³² Burkett, *What Ever Happened to the American Dream?*, 56-57, 60-61, 77; Premillennial popularizers who shared Burkett’s deep suspicion of environmentalists during these year were scarce. Don McAlvany (a post-Tribulationist like the survivalist James McKeever) did write that that environmentalism would be “one of the primary vehicles for accelerating the socialization of American and Europe” in 1990, but such views were uncommon at this time. Don McAlvany, *Toward A New World Order: The Countdown to Armageddon* (Oklahoma City, OK: Hearthstone Publishing, 1990), 77; McAlvany would also attempt to link environmentalism to gun control legislation and accuse the National Biological Survey of being “in reality a socialist scheme to destroy private property rights forever.” Don McAlvany, “America and the New World Order,” in William T. James, ed., *Earth’s Final Days: Essays in Apocalypse III* (Green Forest, AR: New Leaf Press, 1994), 184, 206.

¹³³ Burkett, *What Ever Happened to the American Dream?*, 105.

yields more plant growth; more plant growth feeds more people; and more people put out more CO₂.” (That such a formula reflects acceleration rather than “self-leveling” was apparently lost on Burkett.) Burkett suspected that rising CO₂ levels might actually be “God’s natural mechanism for the increasing population of our planet.”¹³⁴ Along with attacking claims of climate change, he declared concerns over the ozone layers to be “the greatest myth with the largest following,” one which had been dreamed up by “some environmental group’s imagination.” Burkett’s conclusion for counteracting the massive ecological conspiracy was not for Christians to get into science, but rather politics. In true Reconstructionist fashion, he urged readers to vote and run for office as the most important objective for believers to “get control of the state and local tax structure.”¹³⁵

During this time, Burkett realized the potential that fiction held for graphically conveying the biblical principles he hoped to impart to the evangelical mainstream. His anti-statism views had been on full display in his first novel, *The Illuminati*, which he published in 1991. However, it would be his 1995 novel, *The THOR Conspiracy*, in which he would expand upon the points raised by *What Ever Happened to the American Dream?* and add grisly details to his Reconstructionist style of anti-environmentalism. In a near-future dystopia, a Democrat-controlled Congress has abolished the military and transferred all personnel to the EPA to serve as “a bunch of tree-hugging thugs.”¹³⁶ Under

¹³⁴ Burkett, *What Ever Happened to the American Dream?*, 110.

¹³⁵ Burkett, *What Ever Happened to the American Dream?*, 257.

¹³⁶ Larry Burkett, *The THOR Conspiracy: The Seventy-Hour Countdown to Disaster* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Press, 1995), 4, 9.

the EPA's draconian rule air-conditioning has banned, interstate travel required special permits, Americans eat kelp and soy burgers when they can afford them, famine sweeps the land after half of all available farmland has been converted into wilderness preserves and pesticides banned, and researchers now perform their medical tests on human fetuses instead of animals. At the heart of the novel is its protagonist, Dale Crawford, an EPA scientist who dared to tell the truth and is now "the most wanted man in the country." Crawford is both a scientist and a computer genius who gained his fugitive status for daring to clash with his EPA supervisors who wanted to include only selective data points in the agency's climate models while Crawford insisted on designing models based on all available information.¹³⁷ While on the run, Crawford soon discovers that not only have the agency's climate model been fraudulent, but virtually every aspect of the environmental crisis has been manufactured. The "THOR conspiracy" refers to a secret

¹³⁷ Well into the 1990s, a key distinction between premillennialists and Reconstructionists remained their views on computer technology. For premillennialists, such technology was dehumanizing and likely to play a greater role in establishing the Antichrist's kingdom than Christ's Millennial Kingdom. While Lindsey was predicting that "we will all be assigned computer numbers for life" in preparation for the Mark of the Beast and Van Impe believed that the Beast itself would be a "forth-coming master computer," the more politically-oriented LaHaye was writing on "Making Friends with the Computer." Meanwhile, North and his cohort were utterly fascinated by the potential computers held for leveling the political playing field. They were especially intrigued by an instance in which the Environmental Defense Fund (a relatively small activist group at the time) had used "a homebrewed computer model of energy use" to stand up to the much larger utility companies and block a \$5 billion power plant project. Interestingly, the paper included the results of a survey of grass-roots computer groups in the early 1980s and found that people across society were rapidly embracing the technology with one exception. Computers for Christ, a group which partnered with premillennial, fundamentalist churches, encountered strong resistance as members feared that computers might be "a manifestation of the Beast of the Apocalypse." Hal Lindsey, *The 1980's: Countdown to Armageddon* (New York, NY: Bantam Books, 1980), 111; Jack Van Impe, *Your Future: An A-Z Index to Prophecy* (Troy, MI: Jack Van Impe Ministries, 1989), 87; Tim LaHaye, *The Race for the 21st Century* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 1986), 14; William T. James, "The Computer Messiah Comes Forth!" in William T. James, ed., *Storming Toward Armageddon: Essays in Apocalypse* (Green Forest, AR: New Leaf Press, 1992): 71-92; A. Richard Immel, "Computer Guerrillas," in Gary North, ed., *Tactics of Christian Resistance* (Tyler, TX: Geneva Divinity School Press, 1983), 210, 215.

hydrogen bomb test conducted in the Pacific year beforehand which had accidentally ignited the ozone layer, burning a massive hole in it and triggering an anomalous global warming phase. The U.S. government, sensing an opportunity to expand its powers, covered up the errant test and began promoting environmentalism in response. Thus, as the protagonist learns, virtually every environmental concern has actually been a part of the “most incredible hoax of all time.”¹³⁸

Burkett’s Reconstructionist influences become even more apparent as his hero moves to oppose the conspiracy. Burkett mocks those premillennialists who interpret such environmental and political developments as signs of The End and heroizes those who resist the government by home-schooling and moving to Wyoming. (Despite its categorizations as a “Christian” novel, the protagonist does not rely on God’s help but rather that of his benefactor, the world richest man.) These resistance groups appear to be directly inspired by the tactics promoted by Reconstructionists as in Cheyenne, WY, a "Pastor John Elder" leads the "Liberty Foundation" which had arranged for 200,000 Christian families to move to Wyoming where they "dominated state politics." They elected a governor who told citizens to withhold paying federal taxes. Wyoming, after using the 10th Amendment to confiscate federal lands and use their natural resources was now preparing to mint its own "liberty" currency backed by \$10 billion in gold in the Wyoming state vaults. Wyoming was leading a growing states rights movement. Eventually the Wyoming resistance declares war on the United States, but before wide-

¹³⁸ Burkett, *The THOR Conspiracy*, 3, 12.

scale fighting can take place, a fellow resistance group from South Korea detonates an atomic bomb outside the Chinese embassy in Washington D.C.—obliterating the city and killing the President and Vice-President. The book ends with the billionaire benefactor seizing control of the federal government, moving the capital back to Philadelphia (“its original location”), dismantling the majority of federal agencies, and withdrawing its support from the United Nations.¹³⁹

Burkett would hone in on the need to reconstruct American society on biblical principles in his final two novels. In *Solar Flare* (1997), a solar event disrupts humanity’s ability to produce electricity and societies collapse. The central conflict of the novel is between those who remain within the cities, suffering from violence and anarchy as they passively await rescue by a government that is ill-equipped and slow to arrive, and those who escape to rural areas and rebuilt their lives on Old Testament biblical principles. (At one point convening a panel of biblical judges and publicly executing a man for a crime.) Burkett’s anti-urban views mirror those of Rushdoony who, as early as 1966, had warned believers that they would eventually be forced to take flight from urban centers as racial tensions and “leftist revolutionary violence will explode in the cities” when judgement and collapse inevitably came. Ultimately though it was not the roving gangs and revolutionaries who concerned Rushdoony, but the crushing federal response that would put them down easily. “The federal government has become a raging fire which threatens the destruction of American liberties,” he warned before concluding with the charge at

¹³⁹ Burkett, *The THOR Conspiracy*, 303, 323-324.

the great hope of Reconstructionist Catastrophism: a society in which citizens are trained in the “fundamentals of Scripture, and...Christian American Constitutionalism.”¹⁴⁰

Culminating Burkett’s vision of a society reconstructed on the principles of Scripture and Christian American Constitutionalism was his 2000 novel, *Kingdom Come*. In it, Burkett imagines a committed group of Christians who move into central North Carolina, establish a factory, and live as a biblical community of six thousand armed but courteous Christians surrounded by prison fencing. These believers, after establishing political control through local elections, rename the community “Kingdom Come” and register every child as a home-schooler. The novel’s plot revolves around an FBI agent sent to inspect the town who ends up converting to Christianity and helping to defend the town against the machinations of the U.S. government and the IRS. In the final act, the federal government sends undercover operatives into the town to sabotage the factory’s chemical disposal system and divert its untreated dyes and chemicals into the town’s water supply. When scientists from the EPA arrive with the expectation of incriminating the town’s Christian leadership for violating environmental regulations and bringing the full weight of the agency’s authority down on them, the now-covered FBI agent exposes the plot and vindicates the community.¹⁴¹ *Kingdom Come* depicts a fictional account of a particular style of disruptive political tactics which Reconstructionists had theorized about since the 1970s. In one of the earliest articles published by North’s *Biblical*

¹⁴⁰ Larry Burkett, *Solar Flare: A Novel* (Chicago, IL: Northfield Publishing, 1997); Rousas J. Rushdoony, *Preparation For The Future* (San Carlos, CA: The Pamphleteers, 1966), 22-23.

¹⁴¹ Larry Burkett and T. Davis Bunn, *Kingdom Come: A Novel* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2000), 308-309.

Economics Today, Reconstructionist Tom Rose provided the essential outline for Burkett's work of fiction. Rose pointed to an incident where the EPA had threatened to impose sanctions on the city of Tulsa if they failed to shore up their air pollution controls. In Rose's view, such a usurpation of authority by a political "creature" over its "creator" represented a fundamental shift in representative government and "thus is the Christian Republic destroyed!"¹⁴² Rose went on to outline envisioned tactic of Reconstructionist politics—not top-down like the Moral Majority, but grassroots in the extreme:

Individual tax rebellion may perhaps prove to be the most effective war of denying a totalitarian State the funds which supplies its life blood, but there is a clear biblical principle which Americans have not used yet. That is the principle of *interposition* or *nullification*—the principle of having an intermediate level of government impose itself between an oppressed people and the oppressing ruler... Is there not in these States United of America a single state Assembly that will interpose lawful state authority...Is there a county government willing to take a stand?¹⁴³

The Post-Reconstructionists: The *Turning Point* Series

Burkett's Reconstructionist influences may have been clear when one examined his ideas, but he took strenuous care to avoid being too closely associated with the major figures of the movement. This less direct approach to reconstructing society according to biblical principles—in which overt postmillennialism and theonomy were softened and

¹⁴² Tom Rose, "How To Reclaim The American Dream Via Constitutional And Christian Reconstruction," *Biblical Economics Today* 1, no. 2 (April/May, 1978), 3.

¹⁴³ Rose, "How To Reclaim The American Dream Via Constitutional And Christian Reconstruction," 4.

political respectability replaced guerrilla tactics—characterized the work of “post-Reconstructionists.” Emerging in the late 1980s even as men like Rushdoony and North appeared to be at the zenith of their influence, these evangelicals have often denied such Reconstructionist labels, all while still consciously advancing the “kingdom work” of the movement. Thus while the Coalition on Revival had been upfront in its aim to bring Reconstructionists into political union with leading premillennialists, Ahmanson (the Chalcedon Foundation’s chief financier) had been funding a parallel effort that would become known as the *Turning Point* series. This series of sixteen books, written by a veritable “who’s who” of post-Reconstructionists including Marvin and Susan Olasky, Doug Band, Gene Edward Veith Jr., Dean C. Curry, Nancy R. Pearcey, and Herbert Schlossberg, soon appeared in Christian bookstores nationwide promoting a “fully realized Christian worldview.”¹⁴⁴

The *Turning Point* series, under the direction of editor Marvin Olasky, has served as the blueprint for the post-Reconstructionist movement, as it carefully avoided any direct mention of Reconstructionism, Rushdoony, North, or anyone else directly associated with Reconstructionism—even as the books served as layman’s guides to Rushdoony’s *Institutes of Biblical Law*. They also were careful to not mention premillennialism (and especially of the Rapture) while still directly attacking the pietism that characterized premillennialists. As the series establishes from the start, *pietism* is a “false ideology” which had allowed Marxist forces to seize control of the American

¹⁴⁴ Herbert Schlossberg and Marvin Olasky, *Turning Point: A Christian Worldview Declaration* (Westchester, IL: Crossway Books, 1987), 23.

culture as Christians have ignored what the authors consider to be *true* piety: political activism.¹⁴⁵

Anti-environmentalism was a recurring theme throughout the *Turning Point* series. In the series' opening title, *A Christian Worldview Declaration*, Schlossberg and Olasky took direct aim at environmentalism in textbooks, saying that public school curricula excluded the Biblical faith and instead "aggressively espoused the gospel of environmentalism":

The textbooks assumed that the world population's growth rate is out of control, that production of food and other necessities cannot keep pace with population growth, that an undersupply of energy and minerals is creating scarcities, that pollutants are poisoning the environment beyond remedy, and that gulf between haves and have-nots is growing rapidly. All of those statements are incorrect.¹⁴⁶

Doug Bandow wrote that the Bible "sets forth no specific environmental agenda" and that, aside from the Dominion Mandate of Genesis to subdue the Earth, "environmental issues are largely prudential." Bandow criticized the breadth of U.S. environmental policies—from its clean air standards to its limiting of polluting technologies. Christians, he wrote, "need to be open to alternative strategies" that would take into greater account the economic effects of environmental policies and "turning over parks and wilderness areas to private environmental groups" for better management. Christian

¹⁴⁵ While avoiding the use of word "premillennialism," the authors still managed to sneak in a description of those Christians who would "wait for the Second Coming" as anti-intellectuals content to watch conditions progressively worsen. Schlossberg and Olasky, *Turning Point: A Christian Worldview Declaration*, 25-26, 30.

¹⁴⁶ Schlossberg and Olasky, *Turning Point: A Christian Worldview Declaration*, 44.

environmentalism should be guided by the principle of “man’s ‘filling’ of the earth.”¹⁴⁷ Gene Edward Veith, Jr. noted that concern for the environment was indeed “laudable,” but characterized most of those engaged in such activism as “anti-human.” He blamed “environmental extremism” for animal rights, anti-humanism, and abortion, while comparing the movement to fascism.¹⁴⁸ Dean Curry agreed, pointing to the Green movement in West Germany as an example a group seeking “utopia” while in reality only furthering “the global trend of expanding state power.”¹⁴⁹

Turning Point authors also targeted the scientific philosophies which they saw as the basis for environmentalism. Chronicling those scientists who abandoned empiricism, Nancy Pearcey argued that “Christian teachings have served as *presuppositions* for the scientific enterprise.” She rejected Baconian empiricism, arguing that if science was based purely on observation “we would all still be Aristotelians.”¹⁵⁰ Schlossberg held up an unnamed “professor of biology at a Christian college” who made the fatal mistake of not questioning scientific reports on the ecological crisis and was thus “led astray.” Schlossberg faulted the national and international organizations that have uncritically

¹⁴⁷ Doug Bandow, *Beyond Good Intentions: A Biblical View of Politics* (Westchester, IL: Crossway Books, 1988), 201-202.

¹⁴⁸ Gene Edward Veith, Jr., *Postmodern Times: A Christian Guide to Contemporary Thought and Culture* (Westchester, IL: Crossway Books, 1994), 74-75, 85-86. Interestingly, Veith argues that Christians should be appreciative of the new postmodernist paradigms of science as they have helped in “overturning the mechanical clock-work universe of Enlightenment materialism and for restoring a sense of wonder at the unfathomable mystery of God’s creation.” Veith, Jr., *Postmodern Times*, 181.

¹⁴⁹ Dean C. Curry, *A World Without Tyranny: Christian Faith and International Politics* (Westchester, IL: Crossway Books, 1990), 133-134.

¹⁵⁰ Nancy R. Pearcey and Charles B. Thaxton, *The Soul of Science: Christian Faith and Natural Philosophy* (Westchester, IL: Crossway Books, 1994), 36, 128

accepted Malthusian projections regarding population and pollution, noting that “anybody with even the most basic knowledge of economics” would know enough to dismiss such pessimism. As Rushdoony, Pride and other Reconstructionists had done, he directed readers to Julian Simon and Herman Kahn’s cornucopian books as having proved “the Neo-Malthusian science to be false.” Again, without mentioning premillennialism by name, Schlossberg says that Christians attempting to follow the Bible *and* “pagan” ideas of the environmental are in “an impossible situation.”¹⁵¹ In the area of popular culture, K. L. Billingsley argued that the only two groups which Hollywood might defame with impunity are the Christian and the businessman, while it would consider it “blasphemy” to similarly ridicule “animal rights crusaders or environmentalists.”¹⁵² However, the series’ strongest critiques of environmentalism came in its two titles authored by E. Calvin Beisner—the man who would soon become the leading voice for evangelical anti-environmentalism.

The Post-Reconstructionists: E. Calvin Beisner

Born in the United States, Beisner’s has stated that his earliest memories are of the years his family spent living in India as his father worked for the State Department. Shortly after Beisner’s first birthday, his mother was stricken by a mysterious illness and

¹⁵¹ Herbert Schlossberg, “Imperatives for Economic Development,” in Marvin Olasky, ed., *Freedom, Justice, and Hope: Toward a Strategy for the Poor and the Oppressed* (Westchester, IL: Crossway Books, 1988), 100-102.

¹⁵² K. L. Billingsley, *The Seductive Image: A Christian Critique of the World of Film* (Westchester, IL: Crossway Books, 1989), 119.

suffered long-lasting paralysis. With his father at work and his mother unable to fully care for him, Beisner was raised in large part by a local Indian family. In an interview, he later recalled that his first memories are those of the daily walks his Indian mother would lead him on to see the beautiful trees and lush countryside. However, such idyllic excursions began and ended with the young Beisner having to navigate crowded, polluted streets where he often had to climb over the bodies of the poor who had died in the night due to starvation and exposure. In many ways, these twin memories of natural beauty and abject poverty foreshadowed Beisner's lifelong career in economics and environmentalism.¹⁵³

Already a well-connected thinker within the evangelical mainstream by the 1990s,¹⁵⁴ Beisner was influenced by Reconstructionism and quoted Rushdoony at length in his early works.¹⁵⁵ Eschatologically, Beisner has identified as a “postmillennialist of the Chilton type”—specifically in reference to David Chilton's *Paradise Restored*. In regards to theonomy, he believed that Reconstructionists actually permitted *too many* exceptions to Old Testament biblical law. However, as an activist laboring to create coalitions, he was more accommodating of those with differing views than strict

¹⁵³ Interview with author.

¹⁵⁴ Beisner's sister, Gretchen, married the highly influential anti-cult researcher Robert Passantino, whose mentor Walter Martin wrote *Kingdom of the Cults* and established the Christian Research Institute. Working alongside Martin's CRI and through their own Answers In Action ministry, the Passantinos labored both to expose paganism and New Ageism in American culture and equip evangelicals with the “spiritual conscience” to engage with that culture socially and politically. The Passantinos' deeply libertarian theology informed their ministry and proved highly popular with evangelicals, with references to their works appearing regularly in the sermons and books of leaders like Billy Graham.

¹⁵⁵ E. Calvin Beisner, *God In Three Persons* (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 1984), 97-98, 159.

Reconstructionists like the ever-acerbic North often were. Beisner referred to himself as a “classical (not Van Tillian!) presuppositionalist.”¹⁵⁶ This approach gave Beisner a bit more flexibility in the application of biblical law. As he would later write: “Old Testament civil law binds no nation. Although the principles of justice underlying specific civil laws remain binding, the specific manner of applying them does not.”¹⁵⁷ Beisner gave one of the fullest accounts of his theonomy in an appendix in his 1988 book *Prosperity and Poverty*:

In this book I often cite Biblical Law to support my arguments. Because some Christians who call themselves Reconstructionists⁶ and are committed to what they call “theonomy” do the same, and because their system of thought has become controversial in evangelical circles, I thought it best to explain here why I do so even though I am neither part of that movement nor convinced that theonomy is right. Theonomy, according to its chief expositor [Greg Bahnsen], is the doctrine “that the Christian is obligated to keep the whole law of God as a pattern of sanctification and that this law is to be enforced by the civil magistrate where and how the stipulations of God so designate.”...Unlike theonomy, my use of Biblical Law presupposes simply that the same moral Law that was perfectly suited to mankind’s need for moral instruction four thousand years ago is perfectly suited to mankind’s need for moral instruction today.¹⁵⁸

¹⁵⁶ E. Calvin Beisner, “The Character of the Good Apologist: An Appreciation for the Life and Labors of Bob Passantino,” Norman L. Geisler and Chad V. Mister, eds., *Reasons For Faith: Making A Case For The Christian Faith: Essays In Honor of Bob Passantino and Gretchen Passantino Coburn* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2007), 91.

¹⁵⁷ E. Calvin Beisner, *Social Justice: How Good Intentions Undermine Justice and the Gospel* (Washington, DC: Cornwall Alliance, Concerned Women for America, and the Family Research Council, 2013), 25.

¹⁵⁸ E. Calvin Beisner, *Prosperity and Poverty: The Compassionate Use of Resources in a World of Scarcity* (Westchester, IL: Crossway Books, 1988), 228.

Not wishing to be labeled a Reconstructionist himself, Beisner stressed that he did not “endorse their whole system of thought.” However, he did find that many of their “exegetical and ethical arguments are persuasive” and was disappointed at how “much criticism of their thought in mainstream evangelical circles is, I think, based on misunderstanding and caricature.” While in the body of his text he wrote that he was not convinced strict theonomy was right, in his notes he clarified “neither am I convinced that it is wrong” and concluded: “My approach then, while different from theonomy, is not logically exclusive of it.”¹⁵⁹ Even a decade later, with Reconstructionism in decline, Beisner would write that it was only for “very specific reasons” that he felt he could not be classified as a theonomist in the strict sense of the term.¹⁶⁰ Beisner’s view of biblical law as the most “perfectly suited” framework for society today—but not the *only* one demanded by God—allowed him to promote a softer, more accommodating version of postmillennial theonomy which characterizes post-Reconstructionism. This non-binding form of theonomy allowed post-reconstructionists to operate with less resistance in a pluralistic society, to woo piety-oriented evangelicals away from premillennialism, and most importantly, to reforge many of the movement’s earlier connections with libertarian think tanks.

Beisner first met *Turning Point* series editor Marvin Olasky through his work with Jay Grimstead’s Coalition on Revival and the two quickly bonded over their shared

¹⁵⁹ Beisner, *Prosperity and Poverty*, 277.

¹⁶⁰ E. Calvin Beisner, *Where Garden Meets Wilderness: Evangelical Entry into the Environmental Debate* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1997), 179.

commitment to returning American society to its biblical foundations. Olasky was also serving as editor-in-chief at Joel Belz's *World* magazine and was eager to bring Beisner aboard.¹⁶¹ Founded in 1985 by Belz (with the assistance and advice of Reconstructionist David Chilton), *World's* early years were characterized by frequent articles warning of environmental threats. Belz and Olasky passed along the EPA's warnings on radon, the dangers of "pesticide-tainted milk," and stories of local communities defeating proposals for nuclear dump sites. The editorial team even critiqued think tank studies depicting federal seatbelt regulations as overly costly, saying such studies failed to account for reductions in deaths and human suffering.¹⁶² By 1988 the magazine was quoting evangelical seminary deans who believed that while increasingly strong droughts were not likely direct judgements from God, they were still likely the result of humans polluting the atmosphere and intensifying the greenhouse effect—thus making them an indirect judgement "brought on by unwise treatment of God's creation." It praised presidential candidate George H. W. Bush for attacking rival Michael Dukakis' environmental track record and his calls for a global conference to address the greenhouse effect. It openly wondered if an elected Bush would "go down in history" as the President who "turned the tide on environmental policy" and saved the world from

¹⁶¹ Belz was receptive to Olasky's pitch as he had already struck up a relationship with Beisner in 1984 at the annual meeting of the Evangelical Press Association, which Beisner attended as the editor of the Presbyterian journal *Navigator*.

¹⁶² "Natural Radiation," *World* 1, no. 2 (March 24, 1986), 4; "Contaminated Milk," *World* 1, no. 3 (March 31, 1986), 5; Stephen Lutz, "The Message Is Clear In Sandy Mush," *World* 1, no. 11 (May 26, 1986), 8; "Car Safety Programs," *World* 1, no. 4 (April 7, 1986), 4.

climate change.¹⁶³ However, by 1989 Beisner had become a regular contributor and was leading the magazine's rapidly shifting stance on environmentalism.

Beisner's earliest *World* articles were quite incendiary—as he lobbied for a nuclear first strike against Iran, defended price gouging in the wake of Hurricane Andrew, and lent a measure of support to those who bombed abortion clinics—yet it was his claims regarding the science behind environmentalism which drew the most heat from readers.¹⁶⁴ Beisner's first article critical of environmentalism appear in February of 1989 and consisted of answers that he submitted to a poll hosted by the American Humanist Association. He told *World* readers of how his answers described overpopulation as a “myth,” the greenhouse effect as “possibly mythical,” and general environmental degradation as “far less a problem in capitalist countries.”¹⁶⁵ His second anti-environmental appearance featured more direct attacks as he argued that pollution only resulted from productivity (of which the “positive effects outweigh the negative ones”), increasing lake acidification was natural, computer models showed no global warming, any warming that did occur would benefit humanity, the ozone layer was not a pressing threat, and the only relevant measure of a “good environment” was human life

¹⁶³ “Dry Weather God's Judging? Theologians Say Probably Not,” *World* 3, no. 10 (July 18, 1988), 8; Arthur H. Matthews, “Environment Debated As Campaign Heats Up,” *World* 3, no. 15 (September 12, 1988), 4-5.

¹⁶⁴ E. Calvin Beisner, “What Should We Sacrifice To Defeat Hussein?” *World* 5, no. 28 (December 22, 1990), 7; E. Calvin Beisner, “Help! The Market's Working,” *World* 7, no. 18 (September 26, 1992), 11; E. Calvin Beisner, “Shall We Destroy Abortion Clinics?” *World* (February 29, 1988), 11.

¹⁶⁵ E. Calvin Beisner, “Repressive? Unexpected Answers to a Humanist Poll,” *World* 3, no. 33 (February 6, 1989), 13.

expectancy.¹⁶⁶ Readers quickly wrote in criticizing Beisner's "abstruse handling of specific environmental problems" and calling his outlook "one-sided and utopian." Others doubted his metric of life expectancy, criticized his reasoning on lake acidity, and charged *World* with publishing an "irresponsible article" that only served "to 'pooh-pooh' every major environmental concern." One Canadian reader called Beisner's emissions calculations "selfish" and "non-Christian" given that he failed to account for how U.S. pollution affected neighboring countries.¹⁶⁷ Criticism from lay evangelicals grew so loud that months later subscribers were still writing in to thank *World* for publishing reader rebuttals to Beisner's article.¹⁶⁸

Feeling perhaps a bit defensive over the continual publishing of reader criticisms, Beisner himself soon wrote in criticizing the magazine's view on the government (Beisner opposed the government delivering mail) and cheering "one more bad argument down the drain!"¹⁶⁹ It would be almost a year and a half before Beisner again wrote on environmental topics for *World*, one of the longest silences of his career as a contributor. The magazine would however continue to publish advertisements for Reconstructionist events like Gary North's "Life Preparation" conference which featured Beisner and

¹⁶⁶ E. Calvin Beisner, "Clearing the Smog on Environmental Issues," *World* 5, no. 22 (October 27, 1990), 7.

¹⁶⁷ "Mailbag," *World* 5, no. 25 (November 17, 1990), 22; "Mailbag," *World* 5, no. 26 (November 24, 1990), 22; "Mailbag," *World* 5, no. 27 (December 8, 1990), 22.

¹⁶⁸ "Mailbag," *World* 5, no. 32 (January 26, 1991), 22.

¹⁶⁹ "Mailbag," *World* 6, no. 1 (March 30, 1991), 22.

intended to teach students how to “strike fear into the hearts of the eco-fascists.”¹⁷⁰ In Beisner’s absence, David Chilton ventured into the environmental debate, arguing that produce sprayed with man-made pesticides was actually safer than those plants which were forced to rely only on their “natural” defenses and thus produced more toxins. Again, readers quickly wrote in to express their disagreement and disappointment, with one writing “the natural way is God’s way!” Others, identifying as Christian environmentalists or believers suffering from chemical sensitivities, criticized Chilton for shortchanging both the Bible and science. They contended that while some worshiped the “natural” environment, “that does not give us an excuse to substitute chemicals as our environmental savior.”¹⁷¹ Still others were beginning to sense how the eschatology of Belz and contributors like Beisner and Chilton was increasingly out of step with the general premillennialism of evangelicalism. Interspersed with readers defending Christian environmentalism were those criticizing the magazine’s decision to publish a “misguided polemic against the doctrine of the immanency of Christ’s return” written by someone the reader easily identified as “a Reconstructionist and post-millennialist.” Another wrote that *World’s* “dominion theology” was doing “violence to prophetic

¹⁷⁰ The next article by Beisner to appear in *World* during this environmental hiatus would be a review of Larry Burkett’s *The Coming Economic Earthquake* that December; “I Spent \$77,368 to Send My Child to Hell!” *World* 6, no. 3 (April 13, 1991), 23.

¹⁷¹ David Chilton, “Soul Food: Organic Food Really Bugs Me,” *World* 6, no. 17 (September 21, 1991), 21; “Mailbag,” *World* 6, no. 21 (October 19, 1991), 22.

Scripture” and cast doubts on the magazine’s reliability to relate current events to the Bible.¹⁷²

Beisner’s next environmental article for *World* would appear on Halloween of 1992 when he debated Calvin DeWitt on the spiritual and scientific merits of vice presidential candidate Al Gore’s environmentalism. (Beisner dismissed Gore’s born-again Baptist credentials and predicted that his policies would be just as “enormously destructive” as the last evangelical darling in the White House, Jimmy Carter) Following the election and Gore’s victory, he would attribute growing violence to “radical environmentalists” and argue that green legislation was “actually a form of public violence against all Americans.”¹⁷³ Beisner’s big moment—the one which would propel him to the forefront of the evangelical anti-environmental movement—came shortly after Thanksgiving in 1993 when he secured an advance copy (in accordance with Reconstructionist tactics) of the EEN’s “Evangelical Declaration on the Care of Creation.” Appearing as the cover story in the November 27th issue, Beisner’s preemptive story urged evangelical leaders to “think twice” before signing the declaration and offered counters for each of the “Seven Degradations” which the unreleased document expressed Christian concern for. In rapid-fire succession, Beisner argued that agricultural production was not declining, data regarding deforestation was “deceptive,” species extinction was occurring only at a rate of “perhaps one per century,” water was a

¹⁷² “Mailbag,” *World* 6, no. 21 (October 19, 1991), 22; “Mailbag,” *World* 7, no.2 (April 4, 1992), 22.

¹⁷³ “The Environmental Veep,” *World* 7, no. 23 (October 31, 1992), 8-9; E. Calvin Beisner, “It Cuts Both Ways,” *World* 7, no. 34 (February 6, 1993), 16.

“renewable resource” and thus its pollution was irrelevant, there was “no data” showing widespread harm from man-made chemicals and pesticides, the “normal” concentration of ozone was unknown, there was no evidence for global warming, and concerns over “cultural degradation” were misplaced given that life expectancy was continually increasing. He did praise the declaration’s acknowledgement of poverty but cautioned that their goal of a “sustainable economy” would only succeed with a commitment to free-market principles. Beisner concluded with a reassurance drawn from both the cornucopianism he received from Julian Simon and the postmillennial vision he received from Reconstructionists. Whereas the declaration stated that the Earth was the Lord’s, he contended that it had been given to “the sons of men” and evangelicals should not fear human-induced environmental problems but rather “expect to see multiplying creativity as the gospel and the Kingdom of Christ spread over the globe.”¹⁷⁴

Beisner’s scoop initially failed to impress readers, who called it “a superficial, callous approach to a serious issue.”¹⁷⁵ (Beisner would write with humor of how upset Christian environmentalists were, with the Christian Environmental Association declaring

¹⁷⁴ E. Calvin Beisner, “Are God’s Resources Finite? A Group of Christian Leaders Claim They Are, But Does This Claim Square With The Evidence?” *World* 8, no. 27 (November 27, 1993), 10-13; Beisner did not limit his opposition to evangelical environmentalism to the EEN and the pages of *World* magazine either. Writing in *The Freeman*, he warned readers against supporting the Christian Society of the Green Cross. This group’s claims, he wrote, were “subject to serious doubt” and he likened the religious environment organization to the boy who cried “wolf.” Even if such claims of environmental degradation *were* true, they would only be “unnecessary” reminders of the Christian’s duty to obey the Dominion Mandate. E. Calvin Beisner, “The Greening of the Cross,” *The Freeman* 45, no. 7 (July, 1995), 429, 432.

¹⁷⁵ “Mailbag,” *World* 8, no. 31 (January 15, 1994), 5.

him the winner of their “Toxic Turkey Award” that year.¹⁷⁶) However, the sentiment quickly shifted as *World* began publishing letters praising God for Beisner’s critique and thanking him for exposing an issue with the potential to divide the evangelical vote. Others appeared incredulous that some evangelical leaders would prioritize the environment over abortion and felt that it was “time we all take issue with the so-called Christian environmental movement.”¹⁷⁷ For their part, *World* magazine had rallied behind Beisner by this point, promoting his books at every turn and defending him from criticisms launched by the progressive evangelical group like Evangelicals for Social Action.¹⁷⁸ Along with Beisner’s books, *World* also began promoting the works of his mentor Julian Simon. Reviewers called Simon’s books the “truth antidote” for uniformed environmental alarmism—going so far as to tell parents they were “particularly important for people whose children are being indoctrinated through environmental miseducation in the public schools.”¹⁷⁹ When Simon passed in early 1998, Beisner wrote his memorial piece and concluded that the “best tribute” to Simon was to spread his vision of free markets unencumbered by environmental regulations which could in turn produce the

¹⁷⁶ Beisner, *Where Garden Meets Wilderness*, 82.

¹⁷⁷ “Mailbag,” *World* 8, no. 32 (January 22, 1994), 5; “Mailbag,” *World* 8, no. 33 (January 29, 1994), 5.

¹⁷⁸ “Money’s Not The Problem,” *World* 8, no. 35 (February 12, 1994), 3.

¹⁷⁹ Doug Bandow, “Risk, Rhetoric, Facts: Books On Why The Environment Is Better Than We Think,” *World* 11, no. 32 (January 18, 1997), 24; Doug Bandow, “Looking Up: More Proofs That Things Are Not Always As Bad As They Seem,” *World* 11, no. 40 (March 15, 1997), 24.

“growing prosperity that improves both human lives and the environment.”¹⁸⁰ He would continue preaching Simon’s message, telling evangelicals to read Simon’s *The State of Humanity* before getting on their knees “in thanksgiving to God for the enormous benefits you have taken for granted.”¹⁸¹

An explicitly Reconstructionist understanding of postmillennialism fueled Beisner’s cornucopianism. He utterly rejected any kind of “pessimistic” eschatology which held Satan as the present ruler of the world.¹⁸² Invited to speak at the Christianity Today Institute on Population and Global Stewardship in 1994, he argued that environmentalists denied the *imago Dei* of humanity when they calculated resource decline in proportion to population increase. Instead, the biblical view of humans and their environment confirmed Simon’s prediction in that “as we apply our minds to raw materials, scarcity of resources will decline.” Mental application also demanded the “strong, forceful subjugation” of Creation. This optimistic vision of human domination stemmed from Beisner’s conviction in the “continuing growth of Christian faith around the world”—a spreading, victorious Christendom in which population growth would mean not pollution and scarcity but “increased cleansing and transformation from wilderness to garden.” Beisner directed those skeptical of this advancing kingdom to read

¹⁸⁰ E. Calvin Beisner, “Poverty and Pollution,” *World* 13, no. 10 (March 14, 1998), 19-20; A reader and former Harvard classmate of Simon’s would write in shortly after expressing surprise at Beisner’s apparent lack of concern as to whether Simon ever became a Christian before he died. “Mailbag,” *World* 13, on. 14 (April 11, 1998), 4.

¹⁸¹ E. Calvin Beisner, “Sixpence None The Richer,” *World* 14, no. 29 (July 31, 1999), 25.

¹⁸² E. Calvin Beisner, *Evangelical Heathenism: Examining Contemporary Revivalism* (Moscow, ID: Canon Press, 1996), 62-63.

the postmillennial works of Reconstructionists Kenneth Gentry and J. J. Davis, as well as other books published by Reconstructionist presses like Presbyterian & Reformed and North's Institute for Christian Economics.¹⁸³

For the remainder of the decade, evangelical readers would do their best to counter *World's* anti-environmental turn. These readers were quick to praise the magazine, such as when an Appalachian hike inspired Belz to wax poetic about Creation's beauty, but such moments were few and far between.¹⁸⁴ More common were complaints that Belz was unfairly painting environmentalism as "propaganda," that Olasky was wrong for excluding trees and the rest of Creation from the Body of Christ, or that Beisner went too far in attributing economic prosperity to Christian influence.¹⁸⁵ As one reader summarized the decade of frustration: "I am tired of seeing in your pages the misguided notion that equates caring for the earth with a leftist political agenda. Don't you know God is the ultimate environmentalist?"¹⁸⁶

¹⁸³ E. Calvin Beisner, "Imago Dei and the Population Debate," *Trinity Journal* 18, no. 2 (Fall, 1997), 183-184, 189-190; Reconstructionists' antagonism toward scientific consensus stemmed not only from the increased governmental interference it often promoted, but also from their radical views on established scientific principles such as the Second Law of Thermodynamics. Heavily promoted by Gary North, such ideas would find their way into texts dealing directly with evangelical environmentalism such as Beisner's *Where Garden Meets Wilderness*: "The universe is *not* a closed system. Its Creator is distinct from it and—we are not deists, after all—constantly interacting with it. Many of Christ's miracles involved reversals of entropy...entropy applies only to the *physical* world (matter and energy); it does not apply to the spiritual world...[divine interaction] causing matter and energy to behave in ways they otherwise would not, that is, in anti-entropic ways." E. Calvin Beisner, *Where Garden Meets Wilderness: Evangelical Entry into the Environmental Debate* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1997), 25-26.

¹⁸⁴ Joel Belz, "Mountaintop Experience," *World* 13, no. 26 (July 4, 1998), 11; "Mailbag," *World* 13, no. 30 (August 8, 1998), 4.

¹⁸⁵ "Mailbag," *World* 13, no. 11 (March 21, 1998), 4; "Mailbag," *World* 13, no. 48 (December 12, 1998), 6; "Mailbag," *World* 14, no. 13 (April 3, 1999), 4.

¹⁸⁶ "Mailbag," *World* 15, no. 14 (April 8, 2000), 40.

Beisner would only intensify his attacks. His *Where Garden Meets Wilderness* represented a clear synthesis of libertarian cornucopianism and Reconstructionist influence. Not only did Beisner thank his mentor Julian Simon for “his personal encouragement and instruction,” but he also credited Victor Porlier with conversations that “sparked” the idea for the book and thanked him for his help in securing funding.¹⁸⁷ Porlier was a Reconstructionist who frequently collaborated with both Rushdoony’s Chalcedon Foundation and North’s Institute for Christian Economics and whose wife Sharon wrote for the *Journal of Christian Reconstruction* while his son Marc assisted Reconstructionists like Greg Bahnsen with their manuscripts. It was through Porlier’s Chalcedon connections that Beisner met financier Howard Ahmanson Jr. and secured funding from his Fieldstead Institute. Ahmanson had gone on record as saying, “My purpose is total integration of Biblical law into our lives,” and he quickly took an interest in Beisner’s work.¹⁸⁸ Beisner began his book by assuring believers that most evangelical environmentalists had “maintained orthodoxy” and that even the progressive Ron Sider saw “eye to eye” with him on most issues, but quickly pivoted to denouncing their efforts.¹⁸⁹ Evangelical environmentalism, he wrote, relied on fear-mongering in the absence of evidence and maintained a focus on minor issues while ignoring the pressing

¹⁸⁷ Beisner, *Where Garden Meets Wilderness*, ix-x.

¹⁸⁸ Beisner would thank Ahmanson for not only generously funding *Where Garden Meets Wilderness*, but also his other “research and writing.” Beisner, *Where Garden Meets Wilderness*, x; Ahmanson quoted in Frederick Clarkson, “Christian Reconstruction: Theocratic Dominionism Gains Influence,” in *Eyes Right! Challenging the Right Wing Backlash*, ed. Chip Berlet (Boston: South End Press, 1995), 76.

¹⁸⁹ Beisner, *Where Garden Meets Wilderness*, 9-10.

concerns which disproportionately affected the poorest people. This failure to prioritize threats to human well-being represented the “most scandalous aspects of today’s environmental movement.”¹⁹⁰ Beisner vehemently disagreed that any of popular environmental issues actually represented a threat to humans:

"To put it bluntly: No one ever died—no one ever even got sick—from reduced stratospheric ozone...from acid rain falling on forests, lakes, and streams...from increased carbon dioxide in the atmosphere; from global warming, real or imagined; from the environmental effects of logging old-growth forests in the Pacific northwest; from pesticide residue in American-grown fruits and vegetables; from the toxic waste leaks at Love Canal or any other toxic waste site in the United States; from the dioxin spread on the dusty roads of Times Beach, Missouri; from the accident at the Three Mile Island nuclear power station; from all the years of all the operation of all the civilian nuclear power plants in the Western world; or from the Exxon Valdez oil spill in Prince William Sound. No one ever died—no one ever even got sick—from most of the biggest, most exotic environmental problems today's Western environmentalists, including evangelicals, hammer on day in and day out.¹⁹¹

Y2K and the End of Premillennial Environmentalism

Yet even as anti-environmental voices like Beisner’s grew louder and broad evangelical support for the EEN rapidly faded, premillennial prophecy writers briefly stood their ground as the last conservative evangelicals defending scientific environmentalism. They made their last stand in 1997 across a handful of titles. In *The Edge of Time*, the LaLondes warned that global warming as a result of fossil fuels threatened the world and its ecosystems “if something is not done to turn the mess

¹⁹⁰ Beisner, *Where Garden Meets Wilderness*, 75, 79.

¹⁹¹ Beisner, *Where Garden Meets Wilderness*, 79.

around.”¹⁹² Ed Dobson, a former leader within the Moral Majority and advisory editor at *Christianity Today*, wrote his first book on prophecy that year. In it he examined overpopulation, famine, disease, toxic chemicals, deforestation, poisoned waters, and global warming as signs that Christ might return before even the end of the millennium—at one point pausing to remind readers that he was “not quoting the Bible here, but modern scientists.”¹⁹³ Dobson addressed accusations that premillennialists were shirking their earthly responsibilities directly:

The Bible predicts massive environmental changes for the worse as the world nears an end. It predicts the destruction of grasslands and forests, the poisoning of waters and oceans, the vast destruction of wildlife and sea creatures, global warming and major changes in the seasons...On the one hand, we may develop a fatalism based on our understanding of the end times...But this deterioration does not absolve us of the responsibility to do what we can with what we have to protect the environment. On the other hand, we may ignore the environment because we are afraid of worshipping the creation rather than the Creator. We are afraid that in protecting the environment we will develop a distorted view of the creation. However, genuine care for the creation is in fact the working out of our faith through obedience to the word of the God who created the world.¹⁹⁴

However, it would be Lindsey’s *Apocalypse Code* which stands as the last great example of premillennial environmentalism and represents a clear shift in the social concerns of conservative evangelicals. Juxtaposed within its pages, Lindsey wrote of

¹⁹² Peter LaLonde and Paul LaLonde, *The Edge of Time: The Final Countdown Has Begun* (Eugene, OR: Harvest House, 1997), 17.

¹⁹³ Ed Dobson, *The End: Why Jesus Could Return by A.D. 2000* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1997), 21.

¹⁹⁴ Ed Dobson, *50 Remarkable Events Pointing to The End: Why Jesus Could Return by A.D. 2000* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1997), 181-182.

Reconstructionist concerns ranging from Christian American revisionism to economic libertarianism to anti-urbanism—all while taking environmentalism more seriously than ever before and holding tightly to scientific findings in support of his prophetic interpretations. Politically, Lindsey predicted that environmental concerns would soon become one of the primary means by which the United Nations would seize power and install a One World government. He saw its “Agenda 21” program as a blueprint for a “global environmental dictatorship” that bent on confiscating private property and “re-wilding” half the continental United States. Not only control of the land, but also of the people. “Population control is here,” declared Lindsey, “It’s only a matter of time before the slaughter of the innocents begins.”¹⁹⁵ Such international cooperation represented the forfeiting of America’s “sovereignty under God.”¹⁹⁶ Religiously, Lindsey warned of New Age organizations making plans to “inundate Christian churches with nature-worshipping propaganda.”¹⁹⁷

However, despite these concerns, Lindsey devoted the majority of his book to the intensifying threats to the Creation. In a section titled “Evidence of Global Warming Heats Up,” Lindsey cited experts ranging from British Antarctic Survey to Greenpeace in describing the shrinking ice, rising sea levels, disappearing species, and catastrophic

¹⁹⁵ Hal Lindsey, *Apocalypse Code* (Palos Verdes, CA: Western Front, 1997), 103-107.

¹⁹⁶ Lindsey, *Apocalypse Code*, 201; Lindsey’s hermeneutical ingenuity for integrating ecological disasters into biblical prophecy along with his growing acceptance of Christian America revisionism, not even he could find the United States in the End Times. At best, he offered the possibility that the nation might be incorporated into the Antichrist’s revived Roman Empire, but ultimately “for one reason or another, America will take a back seat.” Lindsey, *Apocalypse Code*, 175-178.

¹⁹⁷ Hal Lindsey, *Apocalypse Code* (Palos Verdes, CA: Western Front, 1997), 209.

floods. He was less concerned with whether the primary cause was fossil fuel use or the destruction of the rainforest given “the truth is it’s probably a combination of all there and other abuses we’ve heaped upon the Earth’s ecosystems.”¹⁹⁸ In chapter after chapter, he repeated his conviction that global warming and changes in weather patterns were among the strongest signs that he was living in the last generation. Added to these were the threats of a thinning ozone layer, overpopulation, soil erosion and depletion, strained water supplies, and the possibility of worldwide droughts. Even the prophesied attacks on humans by the “wild beasts of the earth” appeared more and more likely as humans continued tampering with ecosystems: “These beasts will really do some chewing—almost as if it were frantic revenge for mankind’s pollution and destruction of their domain.”¹⁹⁹ In the face of such grim prospects, Lindsey concluded with hope. The hope that in the Millennial Kingdom nature would reach its “highest state of develop”—a paradise in which “the sky will be bluer, the grass will be greener, the flowers will smell sweeter, the air will be cleaner” and humanity will be happier than it’s ever known. In the meantime, as ecological disasters loomed, he reminded readers that God promised the “spiritual stamina and courage,” the “unshakable hope and stability,” and the “wisdom and confidence” to meet such trials.²⁰⁰ As Reconstructionists continued to deny the reality of the environmental crisis and secular environmentalists often struggled to inspire more than despair, premillennialists faced reality with hope.

¹⁹⁸ Hal Lindsey, *Apocalypse Code*, 12-14.

¹⁹⁹ Hal Lindsey, *Apocalypse Code*, 68, 84-85, 89-92.

²⁰⁰ Hal Lindsey, *Apocalypse Code*, 264-265.

As Lindsey's book came to a close, so too did environmentalism as one of the great apocalyptic concerns of premillennialists. Boyer's prediction came to disappointment before the new millennium even arrived. By the time 1998 arrived, a variety of developments were working to diminish and redirect prophetic interest in environmental issues. After decades of reserving their loyalty for the Kingdom of God and remaining politically ambivalent, evangelicals—especially the more conservative among them—had become increasingly entangled with the Republican Party. Coalescing into a reliable voting bloc that would help carry a young George W. Bush to the White House and serve to bolster Republican candidates for decades to come, evangelicals now faced increasing pressure from both within and without their movement to maintain an appropriately skeptical attitude toward the environmental claims made by political rivals like Al Gore. Whereas environmentally minded evangelicals had proven politically effective as recently as 1996 with the defeat of Republican attempts to roll back the Endangered Species Act, the controversial 1997 Kyoto Protocols drew clear battle lines between the parties and what their constituents were expected to support. While partisan politics on their own had historically been unable to dictate the attitudes of premillennialists, now such pressures combined with new interests in the "Bible Code" and the impending Y2K threat to siphon off a tremendous amount of prophetic energy.

Y2K captured the attention of both the premillennial and Reconstructionist camps. First predicted in 1993 by a computer scientist named Peter de Jager in a three-page paper titled "Doomsday 2000," the threat posed by the "Y2K bug" went mainstream

in 1996 when de Jager testified before Congress. By 1997 Gary North was making headlines predicting the total collapse of civilization. Nicknamed “Scary Gary” by the press, North firmly believed Y2K would “wipe out every national government in the West. Not just modify them—destroy them...This is what I have wanted all my adult life. In my view, Y2K is our deliverance.”²⁰¹ Lindsey next book in 1998 was entirely focused on the Y2K threat. Sounding much like an environmentalist, he criticized the federal government for not being more proactive, writing that “decision makers preferred to ignore the warnings and place their bets on a silver bullet.” Along with the government he chastised Christians for being among the most reluctant to make preparations for potentially “the greatest worldwide crisis in history.”²⁰² Major evangelical radio programs like James Dobson’s *Focus on the Family* helped to fan the flames, hosting regular “powerhouse panels” discussing the growing Y2K concern. Larry Burkett, a frequent guest on Dobson’s show, would tell listeners that the government was likely misleading the public by downplaying the threat. The growing “Promise Keeper’s” movement among evangelical men would end up canceling their planned global march over Y2K concerns. For the ever-conspiratorial Grant R. Jeffrey, Y2K would be the opportunity the “global elite” needed to install their world government.²⁰³ The exception to such fears was once again, Dave Hunt. In his 1999 book *Y2K: A Reasoned Response to Mass*

²⁰¹ North quoted in Rob Boston, “Apocalypse Now?” *Church & State* (March, 1999), 8.

²⁰² Hal Lindsey and Cliff Ford, *Facing Millennial Midnight: The Y2K Crisis Confronting America and the World* (Beverly Hills, CA: Western Front, 1998), 24, 70, 257.

²⁰³ Grant R. Jeffrey, *Millennium Meltdown: Spiritual and Practical Strategies to Survive Y2K* (Nashville, TN: Tyndale House, 1998), 164.

Hysteria, Hunt heavily criticized Reconstructionists and premillennialists alike—including Gary North, Larry Burkett, Jerry Falwell, and Jack Van Impe—for their sensationalism and short-sighted predictions. However, by that point, as in other debates, Hunt stood as a voice crying in the wilderness.²⁰⁴

For premillennialists and Reconstructionists who had built their reputations on carefully avoiding the temptation of “date-setting,” the failure of the Y2K prophecy meant a heavy setback for their respective movements. Neither would disappear entirely, but the safe arrival of the new millennium left many evangelicals decidedly less anxious over the Millennial Kingdom (whether premillennial or postmillennial). As for Beisner, he had little interest in celebrating that New Years as his focus was set on a different holiday: the upcoming 30th Earth Day. When it arrived that April, he was proud to unveil the culmination of his anti-environmental efforts—the formation of the Interfaith Council on Environmental Stewardship (ICES) and its founding document, The Cornwall Declaration on Environmental Stewardship.²⁰⁵ Initially billed as an organization represented by Jewish, Catholic, and Protestant leaders, ICES would soon be renamed as The Cornwall Alliance and drop most of its non-Protestant leadership. Working at a pace that would have exhausted even the frenetic North, Beisner would quickly leverage his connections throughout the evangelical world to bring his Cornwall Alliance to the forefront of any and all discussions on environmentalism—typically for the purpose of

²⁰⁴ Dave Hunt, *Y2K: A Reasoned Response to Mass Hysteria* (Eugene, OR: Harvest House, 1999), 5-10, 18, 246.

²⁰⁵ E. Calvin Beisner, “Warming Up To Earth Day,” *World* 15, no. 16 (April 22, 2000), 29.

shutting such discussions down. Such actions by Beisner and other post-Reconstructionists were what Larsen had seen in action in 2000 when he wrote:

...as evangelical support for environmentalism mushroomed and become more organized in the 1990s, a backlash also created a contentious opposing camp, revealing an important, but hitherto largely unrecognized, faultline within American evangelicalism dividing an "evangelical establishment" that was sensitive to issues of respectability and a "new fundamentalism" that was preoccupied with free-market values.²⁰⁶

Unbeknownst to Larsen, such a "faultline" had in fact been recognized and contested by conservative evangelicals for decades. Amillennial environmentalists like DeWitt may have had little interest in the eschatological debates of their premillennial and postmillennial peers, but it was precisely those debates and their outcomes which would play a crucial role in deciding the fate of evangelical environmentalism beyond the year 2000.

²⁰⁶ Larsen, "God's Gardeners," 5.

5: THE GREAT DISAPPOINTMENT: THE HOPE AND COLLAPSE OF EVANGELICAL ENVIRONMENTALISM

When the world's digital clocks struck millennial midnight and then kept humming, most breathed a sigh of relief. By the time the sun was rising on January 1, 2000, it had become clear that the apocalypse would—yet again—be delayed until further notice. Aside from a few brief power outages, Y2K had not brought the “deliverance” Gary North and his survivalist friends had prayed for. It certainly had not brought Jesus back. For premillennialists, the increasingly political nature of environmentalism had triggered a pause in its prophetic significance since 1997 and now, after the flurry of failed Y2K predictions, the optimism of the new millennium only further dampened prophetic interest across all issues. While a few bombastic journalists like Grace Halsell continued to portray premillennialists as secretly exercising control over Washington politics and threatening the very survival of the human race, in reality conservative evangelicals at this time were generally more interested in Christian psychology than prophecy.¹ What energy they did feel like devoting to pondering the End Times was quickly diverted away from environmental issues by new technological and geopolitical developments.

¹ Grace Halsell, *Forcing God's Hand: Why Millions Pray for a Quick Rapture—And Destruction of Planet Earth* (Washington, DC: Crossroads International Publishers, 1999).

Premillennial Diversions: The Bible Code, 9/11, and Zionism

One of these diversion which sapped early 2000s premillennial environmentalism of its energy was that of the “Bible Code.” First theorized in the journal *Statistical Science* in 1994 as “equidistant letter sequences” (ELS), its discoverers claimed that computing technology made it possible to locate the names of famous rabbis in the text of Genesis. A journalist named Michael Drosnin soon claimed to have discovered an encrypted passage in the Torah predicting the assassination of then Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin. When Rabin was assassinated the following year, interest in the possibility that the Bible contained encrypted predictions of the future skyrocketed.² In particular, ELS captivated premillennialist Paul Crouch, whose Trinity Broadcasting Network regularly hosted Bible Code experts and spent tens of millions of dollars producing and distributing the films *The Omega Code* (1999) and *Megiddo: The Omega Code 2* (2001) in theaters across the country. In 2004 Crouch published *The Shadow of the Apocalypse*, excitedly telling readers that the Bible was “a cryptogram designed by the Almighty,” a book containing “untold secrets to which—thanks to computer technology—we already hold the key.”³ Using the ELS method, Crouch believed that he and his team had found references to every major historical events—from Napoleon to

² Doron Wirztum, Eliyahu Rips, and Yoav Rosenberg, “Equidistant Letter Sequence in the Book of Genesis,” *Statistical Science* 9, no. 3 (August, 1994): 429-438. In his preface, the journal’s editor commented on the unusual nature of the article, but stated that the results had “baffled” peer reviewers and thus the study was presented to readers as a “challenging puzzle.” The studies authors (in particular Rips) would later disavow the less rigorous and more sensational works by those like Drosnin; Michael Drosnin, *The Bible Code* (New York, NY: Simon & Schuster, 1997).

³ Paul F. Crouch, *The Shadow of the Apocalypse: When All Hell Breaks Loose* (New York, NY: G. P. Putnam’s Sons, 2004), 19-20.

Hitler, Shakespeare to Einstein, the American Revolution to the moon landing. He even claimed to have found his own name alongside the names of his wife and his broadcasting network. However, at no point among the dozens of prophetically significant discoveries did Crouch claim to find anything related to pollution, overpopulation, climate change, or any of the other pressing threats to the Creation.⁴ With the Bible Code, the technophilia of Reconstructionists combined with the prophecy obsession of premillennialists to produce one of the strangest fads in the history of evangelicalism.

Following the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, premillennialists turned their attention back to the Middle East. While conservative evangelicals—along with virtually all other Americans—contributed to the outpouring of patriotism in the wake of the attacks, premillennialism once again served as something of a check against excessive nationalism. Charles Dyer, after watching how President George W. Bush “rose to that challenge,” could only think of how eager people were to follow a strong leader in the midst of tragedy and how easily the Antichrist would someday be able to rally supporters. He also foresaw how the rapidly accumulating “national security” measures could be turned against non-terrorist citizens.⁵ Still, most prophecy writers were not quite ready to attach such dark imagery to the Bush administration and for the next decade the vast

⁴ Crouch, *The Shadow of the Apocalypse*, 13, 34-35.

⁵ Charles H. Dyer, “A Peace to End All Peace,” in Charles H. Dyer, ed., *Prophecy in Light of Today* (Chicago, IL: Moody Bible Institute, 2002), 13-16.

majority of prophecy titles would focus on the threats of Islamic terrorism, a nuclear Iran, and the politics of the Middle East.

Premillennial environmental concern would intersect with U.S. foreign policy in the Middle East, though it would look far different from the scientifically-informed commentaries of decades past. In 2004, former White House correspondent William Koenig (an outspoken premillennialist) published *Eye to Eye: Facing the Consequences of Dividing Israel* and reframed U.S. environmental disasters since the “Land for Peace” Madrid Conference of October, 1991, as God’s judgement for every instances in which the United States appeared to pressure Israel to cede land to its Arab neighbors. Koenig’s new interpretation funneled evangelical attention away from scientific explanations for the unprecedented weather of years like the tempestuous 2003. Pitting his belief against the World Meteorological Organization, he wrote: “They pointed to global warming, however, we point to the repercussions of dividing God’s covenant land.”⁶ Other premillennialists were eager to take up Israel-environmental disaster connection. David Reagan quickly revised his 2004 book *America the Beautiful?* to expand on Koenig’s analysis, writing that God was calling the United States to repentance with Mount Saint Helens in 1980, the droughts of 1987, Hurricane Andrew in 1992, the record floods of

⁶ William Koenig, *Eye to Eye: Facing the Consequences of Dividing Israel* (Springfield, MO: 21st Century Press, 2004), 132.

1993, and the forest fires of 2002.⁷ Jack Chick published a full-sized comic book in which a farmer surveys his battered crops and concludes that his ruin is “because of what we did to Israel today... We’re messing with God’s Holy Land and these storms are from God—WARNING US!” The text goes on to explain how Hurricane Katrina had formed only days after the United States “pressured Israel into evacuating Gaza.” In total, Chick estimated that “messing with Israel” had cost the United States \$56 billion due to natural disasters in 2005 alone.⁸ John McTernan claimed that he had begun to notice a connection between nations “sins” and natural disasters as early as 1987, as the judgements always struck within twenty-four hours of events including “Gay Pride Day” and Supreme Court decisions protecting abortion. He agreed with Koenig that in 1991 the United States “began to directly interfere with God’s prophetic plan” for the nation of Israel and thus natural disasters were a matter of Middle Eastern politics than environmental science.⁹ For his part, Hal Lindsey had written on the “Land for Peace”

⁷ David R. Reagan, *America the Beautiful? The United States in Bible Prophecy*, second edition (McKinney, TX: Lamb & Lion Ministries, 2006), 14, 28, 118. The title of Reagan’s book notwithstanding, even he had to conclude that there were no specific prophecies related to the United States: “We are covered by general prophecies that directly relate to all nations, but beyond that, our end time destiny is not specifically mentioned.” Reagan, *America the Beautiful?*, 72-73.

⁸ Jack T. Chick, *Somebody Angry?* (Rancho Cucamonga, CA: Chick Publications, 2008); Beisner, for his part, was vocal in his disagreement with the unquestioning support many evangelicals were lending to Israel. Their endorsement of “far-reaching and unilateral political commitments” to Israel only served to hamper the spread of the Gospel. “Mailbag,” *World* 18, no. 9 (March 8, 2003), 61-62.

⁹ John P. McTernan, *As America Has Done to Israel* (New Kensington, PA: Whitaker House, 2008), 7, 147.

negotiations from a premillennial perspective in 1994, but drew no connections to national curses or environmental disasters.¹⁰

Along with these diversions of interpretive energy, premillennialism in the early years of the new millennium also suffered from the decline of evangelical bookstores. Religious publishing overall grew over 50% from 2000 to 2005—reaching an estimated \$2.3 billion value. However this boom, which began in the 1990s, did not translate into increased prosperity for evangelical bookstores. Due to the popularity of evangelical titles, readers were increasingly able to purchase books from massive secular retailers like Barnes & Noble rather than at local religious booksellers. From 2003 to 2004, while sales continued to increase industry-wide, over 500 Christian Booksellers Association stores closed their doors. As a result, aside from bestsellers like the *Left Behind* series, evangelical publishers had dwindling opportunities to market their less-popular and backlist premillennial titles.¹¹

The proliferation of the internet also changed the nature of how Americans consumed their apocalypticism. Not only the new medium further disrupt the evangelical book market, but it opened new pathways for people to now get their fill of Last Days speculation directly from science and pop culture rather than from preachers and paperbacks. Scholars such Amy Frykholm have observed that while interest in the

¹⁰ Hal Lindsey, *Planet Earth—2000 A.D.: Will Mankind Survive?* (Palos Verdes, CA: Western Front, 1994), 148-149.

¹¹ Paul C. Gutjhar, “The Perseverance of Print-Bound Saints: Protestant Book Publishing,” in David Paul Nord, Joan Shelley Rubin, and Michael Schudson, eds., *A History of the Book in America, Volume 5: The Enduring Book: Print Culture in Postwar America* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2009), 380-383.

apocalypse generally accelerated in the early 2000s, it began to resemble the biblical apocalypse less and less. According to Lorenzo DiTomasso, the internet has “fundamentally changed how apocalyptic speculation is conceived, manufactured, and disseminated”—with the result that now intellectual depth has been sacrificed for “unlimited content.”¹²

Rushdoony’s Ghost: Christian Textbooks

At the same time, Reconstructionism continued to suffer losses within its core movement as Rousas Rushdoony died in February of 2000—having still not spoken to his son-in-law Gary North and before the dramatic post-9/11 expansion of the State which he loathed. The Chalcedon Foundation at Vallecito would continue operations, but with the loss of Rushdoony along with the earlier losses of financially supportive board members like Howard Ahmanson Jr. it would become a shell of its former self. (Ahmanson’s own influence in promoting a “biblical worldview” only increased following his Chalcedon departure as he continued funding post-Reconstructionists like E. Calvin Beisner—being

¹² Amy Frykholm, *Christian Understandings of the Future: The Historical Trajectory* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2016), 327-328; Lorenzo DiTomasso, “Apocalypticism and Popular Culture,” in John J. Collins, ed., *The Oxford Handbook of Apocalyptic Literature* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2014), 501.

named one of *Time* magazine's "25 Most Influential Evangelicals in America" in 2005.¹³) Somewhat similarly, the North's Tyler branch and its Institute of Christian Economics would see its influence and output diminish following the failed expectations of Y2K. It would be during this time that Atlanta, Georgia, would become the new epicenter of hardcore Reconstructionism as Gary DeMar and the presses at American Vision took up the slack. Among American Vision's robust catalogue, its greatest influence has come through its offering of homeschool curricula. (North himself would relocate to the Atlanta area in the coming years and assist with curriculum design.)

The Christian homeschool movement remains the primary vehicle for promoting the original style of Reconstructionism as even curricula designed by ostensibly premillennial publishers have come to adopt many of their ideas regarding science, history, and governance. By the early 2000s, even the premillennial bastion, Bob Jones University, was showing signs of Reconstructionist influence in their textbooks. R. Terrance Egolf, a former naval commander trained in nuclear submarine propulsion, arrived in Greenville in 2000 and began revising many of the BJU high school-level physics textbooks from an overtly dominionist perspective. In line with Reconstructionist

¹³ "25 Most Influential Evangelicals in America," *Time* (February 7, 2005); It is important to note that while Ahmanson pivoted from supporting the original Reconstructionist projects to the savvier works of post-Reconstructionists, he never abandoned the core mission of Rushdoony and North. Ahmanson would later come to fault these men for failing to incorporate virtue into their absolutist worldviews, but he would always be upfront in acknowledging that works like Rushdoony's *Politics of Guilt and Pity* and North's *Biblical Economics Today* newsletter were foundational "in formulating a lot of the policies and habits we have cultivated at Fieldstead [Ahmanson's philanthropic institute] ever since." Howard Ahmanson, Jr., "What Christian Reconstructionism Gave Me," *Howard Ahmanson Jr.* (August 14, 2018), <https://howardahmansonjr.com/2018/08/what-christian-reconstruction-gave-me/>.

thinkers, Egolf preached to home schooled students “The advancement of science and technology depends on a thorough understanding of the nature of matter. Without this understanding, we would not be able to obey the dominion mandate, given to Adam in the first chapter of the Book of Genesis, to subdue the earth.”¹⁴ In revising the university’s *Physical Science* textbook, Egolf now began each chapter with a “Dominion Science Problem” as the “unifying theme” of the book was the conviction that science was a tool for fulfilling the Genesis 1:28 mandate.¹⁵

Whereas the original 1983 edition of the textbook—*Basic Science for Christian Schools*—had been a proudly premillennial text that employed Two Books ecotheology and took pollution seriously, now Egolf began by introducing students to Van Til’s presuppositionalism. “As God’s infallible Word, the Bible confronts us with a series of authoritative presuppositions,” he wrote. “A presupposition is an idea that is not proved but that we use as the basis for proving other things.”¹⁶ After reading about how scientists develop models to study large issues like climate change, the students then considered Egolf’s warnings that such models are never true “in the absolute sense,” that some scientists are willing to “alter the data or eliminate data that contradicts the results of their research if it will save them from failure or gain them money or fame,” and that when a

¹⁴ R. Terrance Egolf, *Physics for Christian Schools*, 2nd edition (Greenville, SC: Bob Jones University Press, 2004), 286.

¹⁵ Egolf, *Physical Science*, 22.

¹⁶ John E. Jenkins and George Mulfinger, Jr., *Basic Science for Christian Schools* (Greenville, SC: Bob Jones University, 1983), 6, 255, 389; R. Terrance Egolf, *Physical Science*, 4th edition (Greenville, SC: Bob Jones University, 2008), 5.

scientist reasons from inference his results “depend heavily on his presuppositions.”¹⁷ Egolf even went so far as to downplay premillennial fears of RFID chips as harbingers of the “Mark of the Beast” in favor of what he considered to be more reasonable dominion science applications such as finding lost children and pets.¹⁸

In some case, Reconstructionist textbook publisher exerted influence by directly purchasing the rights to older textbooks and republishing them with a radically reoriented perspectives on ecology. In 1970, the Creation Research Society published its textbook *Biology: A Search for Order in Complexity* under the editorial supervision of John N. Moore (professor of natural science at Michigan State University) and Harold Schultz Slusher (professor of geophysics at the University of Texas at El Paso). Although closely linked to Reconstructionism, the early Creation Research Society faced much criticism from Reconstructionists like North (who would accuse Moore of teaching “compromised creationism”¹⁹) and in many ways *Biology* reflected more so the views of the premillennial Henry Morris in its promotion of Two Books Theology and its seriousness consideration of the ecological crisis. This original version featured multiple sections highlighting the dangers of air and water pollution as well as the long-term buildup of pesticides and other poisons in the tissues of children. “Scientists today are pleading for an awareness of the problem, for more scientific research, and for a serious effort to

¹⁷ Egolf, *Physical Science*, 10-11.

¹⁸ Egolf, *Physical Science*, 347.

¹⁹ Gary North, *Political Polytheism: The Myth of Pluralism* (Tyler, TX: Institute for Christian Economics, 1989), 288.

reduce pollution of all forms to a minimum,” wrote the Creation Research Society authors. “We must learn to live in harmony with nature; the effective way of exercising the kind of control man should exercise.”²⁰ However, by the early 2000s, the overtly Reconstructionist Christian Liberty Academy School System had obtained the rights to *Biology* and revised the textbook in 2004 to reflect a much different view of ecology. Conservation became a matter of human control rather than stewardship. Defining “science” as humanity’s God-assigned task for fulfilling the “Creation Mandate” (Genesis 1:28), it warned specifically against natural theology as a gateway to “evolutionism.” In defining “ecology,” this new edition taught students that “man exercises his control over nature best when he understands the intricate balances within the natural world.” While still including many of the original edition’s warnings against pollution, the textbook now balanced these warnings with competing views such as the “life-saving benefits” of pesticides like DDT.²¹

Richard Cizik and the Evangelical Environmental Network

As for the amillennial environmental work being done among the evangelical mainstream, the 2000s represented a time of tremendous growth and hope—though not without dogged opposition from Beisner and the other post-Reconstructionists at *World* magazine. As it had in 1996 with its “Noah’s Ark” defense of the Endangered Species

²⁰ Creation Research Society, *Biology: A Search for Order in Complexity* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1970), 516.

²¹ Leslie Mackenzie, et al. *Biology: A Search for Order in Complexity*, second edition, (Arlington Heights, IL: Christian Liberty Press, 2004), 3, 341, 367.

Act, the Evangelical Environmental Network drew national media attention in 2002 with its “What Would Jesus Drive?” campaign in support of higher fuel standards and taxes on SUVs. EEN director Jim Ball and his wife promoted the campaign by driving across the nation in their Toyota Prius. The final stop on their tour was Creation Fest—the largest Christian music festival in the country—where the EEN had established its “Creation Festival Recycling Program,” encouraging evangelicals across the political spectrum to take tangible steps toward addressing pollution. Evangelical support for environmental action and legislation was broad at this time that even readers of *World* were writing in demanding that it was finally “time to tax heavily the owners of large SUVs so that they feel the effects of their consumer choices.”²² *World* staff writers disagreed. In opposing the WWJD campaign, they questioned Jim Ball and the other EEN leaders who “simply take radical environmentalist claims at face value—then stomp on the gas.”²³ Marvin Olasky regularly downplayed environmental concerns in his articles, describing the works of “ecological fatalists” like Paul Ehrlich as “self-defeating” for failing to promote the kind of economic affluence that free markets offered.²⁴ Returning from a visit to the Alaskan oil fields, he praised technological advancements which (he claimed) allowed

²² “Mailbag,” *World* 17, no. 38 (October 5, 2002), 52.

²³ Timothy Lamer, “Sunday Drivers,” *World* 17, no. 47 (December 7, 2002), 9.

²⁴ Marvin Olasky, “Environmentalism,” *World* 15, no. 22 (June 3, 2000), 38.

the United States to increasing drilling “with not much more environmental impact than spitting in a lake.”²⁵

For all of the publicity that Ball and his Prius were able to drum up, the greatest boon for the mainstream U.S. evangelical environmental in the early 2000s would take place on the other side of the Atlantic Ocean. In 2002, Richard Cizik, the National Evangelical Association’s Vice President for Government Affairs, attended a climate forum hosted by Oxford University. While the forum’s resulting “Oxford Declaration on Global Warming”²⁶ would attract media attention, it was a private conversation in the university’s gardens that would shape the trajectory of evangelical environmentalism over the next decade. During a break between forum sessions, Cizik had taken an afternoon stroll with Sir John Houghton, a committed evangelical and the co-chair of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). As the two walked, Houghton shared his conviction that Christians had a unique duty to address climate change. By the time they left the gardens, Cizik had experienced what he would later describe as a “conversion” experience.²⁷ Now convicted of the need for an organized evangelical

²⁵ Marvin Olasky, “Alaskan Opportunity,” *World* 17, no. 28 (July 27, 2002), <https://wng.org/articles/alaskan-opportunity-1617630400>; Readers disagreed with Olasky’s premise, pointing out that Americans were “addicted to oil” and that such a gluttonous, polluting addiction was incompatible with good stewardship. “Mailbag,” *World* 17, no. 33 (August 31, 2002), 29.

²⁶ The forum’s declaration was undoubtedly a landmark document in Christian environmentalism. It not only affirmed that Christians have a “special obligation to provide moral leadership and an example of caring service to people and to all God’s creation,” but it specified the biblical and scientific means by which “human-induced climate change diminishes God’s creation.” Katharine K. Wilkinson, *Between God and Green: How Evangelicals are Cultivating a Middle Ground on Climate Change* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2012), 145-147.

²⁷ Katharine K. Wilkinson, *Between God and Green: How Evangelicals are Cultivating a Middle Ground on Climate Change* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2012), 9-26.

environmental movement, Cizik returned to the United States determined to throw the NAE's full support behind the EEN.

By 2004 it was apparent that Cizik's marshaling of NAE support was transforming the EEN into a force to be reckoned with. That June, with the support of Cizik and David Neff (editor of *Christianity Today*), the EEN hosted a major conference at Chesapeake Bay and issued the subsequent "Sandy Cove Covenant and Invitation." This declaration bound the EEN, NAE, and *Christianity Today* together in a shared commitment to "engage the evangelical community in a discussion about the question of climate change with the goal of reaching a consensus statement on the subject in twelve months."²⁸ As part of its covenanted efforts, the NAE issued its own declaration that October titled "For the Health of the Nation" in which the national organization affirmed that, in contrast to the style of dominion promoted by Reconstructionists, dominion was "a sacred responsibility to steward the Earth and not a license to abuse the creation of which we are a part. We are not the owners of creation, but its stewards, summoned by God to 'watch over and care for it.'"²⁹ *Christianity Today*, for their part, would come out in favor of the contentious McCain-Lieberman global warming bill, though it would be defeated by the Bush administration and a Republican-controlled Senate. By 2005, Cizik was marching alongside Ball and the EEN carrying signs reading "Stop Mercury

²⁸ Wilkinson, *Between God and Green*, 148-149.

²⁹ National Association of Evangelicals, *For the Health of the Nation: An Evangelical Call to Civic Responsibility* (Washington, DC: National Association of Evangelicals, 2004).

Poisoning of the Unborn."³⁰ Although such attempts at pairing environmentalism with pro-life sentiments would produce only mixed results, the combined efforts of the EEN, NAE, and *Christianity Today* as facilitated by Cizik was proving that organized environmentalism could flourish in the evangelical mainstream. Hoping to seize upon the green momentum building among evangelicals, Cizik and the EEN would soon make a push for the most all-encompassing evangelical commitment ever to addressing the crisis—an effort that would mark the faith’s highest engagement with environmental concerns and also its downfall.

By late 2005, reports began to emerge that the NAE, under Cizik’s direction, was spearheading a new climate endeavor and circulating a draft of policy statements among its leadership.³¹ As word spread, a backlash began to develop. *World* magazine had already described the creation care programs of the NAE as casting “pantheistic environmentalism in terms conservative Christians can embrace—or at least consider.” Now, with momentum building, James Dobson’s *Focus on the Family* accused the NAE of partnering with non-Christian groups that “put plants and animals above humans.” For his part, NAE president Ted Haggard tried to distance the organization from secular environmentalists, telling reporters he was not returning their phone calls and flatly

³⁰ Blaine Harden, “The Greening of Evangelicals,” *Washington Post* (February 6, 2005), <https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/politics/2005/02/06/the-greening-of-evangelicals/33a88bd4-4ef2-49a3-929c-23480b1d1fde/>.

³¹ Clive Cookson, “Evangelicals Converted on the Environment,” *Financial Times* (December 23, 2005).

stating: “We are not their allies.”³² Beisner was unconvinced and hurriedly fired off a paper opposing the NAE’s climate project and beginning them to consider the uncertainties of climate models and “apply the principles of prudence” Jesus Christ espoused before addressing the issue.³³ However, although certain conservative evangelicals opposed Cizik’s growing work, these leaders were generally more beholden to the Religious Right than active NAE constituents and thus Ted Haggard, president of the NAE, felt little compulsion to heed calls for reining in Cizik (or having him outright removed as some demanded). The NAE, out of respect for cross-evangelical unity, would refrain from issuing an “official” statement on climate change at that time, but with Haggard’s blessing and protection, Cizik’s work continued. Thus Cizik, along with Ball, independently sought out eighty six leading evangelicals (including Ron Sider, Wheaton College president Duane Litfin, and megachurch pastors Rick Warren and Joel Hunter) to sign onto their “Evangelical Climate Initiative” (ECI). Cizik and Ball were confident in their work given that recent polling data by Ellison had shown that 70% of evangelicals believed climate change to be a serious issue. With such popular support, Ball felt comfortable in further trying to distance their efforts from secular organizations, assuring

³² Mark Bergin, “Love Thy Neighbor, Love The Neighborhood,” *World* 20, no. 30 (August 6, 2005), 22-23.

³³ E. Calvin Beisner, “An Examination of the Scientific, Ethical and Theological Implications of Climate Change Policy,” *The Cornwall Alliance* (November 21, 2005), <http://web.archive.org/web/20170516204333/http://cornwallalliance.org/docs/an-examination-of-the-scientific-ethical-and-theological-implications-of-climate-change-policy.pdf>.

doubters that both the “What Would Jesus Drive?” campaign and the ECI were “solely evangelical campaigns and did not involve working environmentalists.”³⁴

In a last ditch effort, Beisner and other opponents of the ECI signed a letter to the NAE requesting that the national organization refrain from adopting “any official position on the issue of global climate change.” Despite such opposition, on February 8, 2006, the EEN officially launched its Evangelical Climate Initiative along with its founding document, “Climate Change: An Evangelical Call to Action.” Through this new initiative and declaration, the EEN believed it had taken its largest step in fulfilling its purpose to “declare the lordship of Jesus Christ over all creation” via the stewardship of nature. The ECI was not a purely theoretical or aspirational document. In signing with the ECI, these leading evangelicals were openly committing to support federal cap-and-trade legislation to reduce carbon dioxide emissions across the nation’s economy.³⁵ The response to the ECI was immediate and sustained, capturing the attention of the secular press and catapulting Ball and Cizik to the front pages. The *New York Times* dubbed Cizik the “Earthy Evangelist” while *Time* praised Ball as one of its five most innovative “climate

³⁴ Jim Ball, “A Response to Dr. Jay Richards,” paper presented at the Institute on Religion and Democracy, “God Is Great. Is God Green? A Conference on Evangelicals and the Environmental Task,” Washington D.C., November 14, 2007.

³⁵ Ball, “A Response to Dr. Jay Richards.” Noting the “political toxicity” of carbon taxes, the document’s drafter did state that they would only support such taxes if they were revenue-neutral, but the ECI remained a politically activist initiative nonetheless and set itself at odds with much of the Bush administration’s agenda.

crusaders."³⁶ However, while the press fawned over the new evangelical environmental movement and post-Reconstructionists launched their attacks, the leadership of the ECI had already identified a particular wing of evangelicalism which they had no intention of partnering with: premillennialists.

Alienating Premillennialists: The ECI's Self-Sabotage

A handful of excellent histories have already chronicled the heady and tumultuous days of the ECI. However, these accounts have largely focused on the support mainstream evangelical environmentalists received from the broader society and the hostility they faced from rightwing political and post-Reconstructionist forces. They have not yet significantly factored in the opportunity these (almost entirely amillennial) environmentalists missed by choosing to reject rather than partner with premillennialists. At the ECI's launch, Ball had confidently stated that within a year or so he believed "we will, in effect, have a consensus."³⁷ Such cross-evangelical consensus did not include the millions of believers who had read the apocalyptic environmental warnings of Graham, Kirban, and Lindsey for decades and were already primed to partner with secular scientists. Yet even decades after it was first invented, the End Times Apathy Hypothesis

³⁶ Deborah Solomon, "Earthy Evangelist," *New York Times* (April 3, 2005), 17. It is important to note that when the *New York Times* interviewed Cizik and asked him directly if he believed in the Rapture, Cizik answered only indirectly. His affirmation that there would at some be a "Second Coming of Jesus Christ" vague enough to cover both the premillennial and amillennial positions (and *technically* the postmillennial as well); Eric Roston, "Preaching for the Planet," *Time* 167, no. 14 (April 3, 2006), 65.

³⁷ Mark Bergin, "Red Light, Green Light," *World 21*, no. 8 (February 25, 2006), 29.

continued to sabotage efforts. Before the ECI's launch, Houghton told reporters that he was uninterested in working with the "extreme minority who have taken the view that the future of the earth doesn't matter because the whole thing will soon be wound up."³⁸ The first reports of the ECI's signing framed it as an endeavor pitting environmentally-minded evangelicals against premillennialists:

But environmental issues have proved divisive within the body of believers who identify themselves as evangelicals. Some who believe the world is in the "end times," with a return of Jesus imminent, have not seen the necessity of protecting the environment for the long term. Others, meanwhile, have taken the view espoused by the evangelicals who unveiled their campaign Wednesday, that humans were given dominion over the Earth with the responsibility to protect it.³⁹

Even the post-Reconstructionist opponents of the ECI recognized the error of such framing and how such needless antagonism would only hurt the program in the long run. Jay Richards of the Acton Institute called it a "classic false dilemma" and one that might be attributed "to media bias, except that those who spearheaded the ECI have helped perpetuate the false dilemma."⁴⁰ Yet as scholar Katharine K. Wilkinson found in her interviews with ECI leaders, the mostly amillennial group was forthcoming about "consciously and actively working against" premillennialists.⁴¹ Jim Wallis, the editor of

³⁸ Cookson, "Evangelicals Converted on the Environment."

³⁹ Frank James, "Evangelicals Launch Environment Crusade," *Chicago Tribune* (February 9, 2006), 1.

⁴⁰ Jay Richards, "Evangelicals and the Environment: How Close as Alliance," paper presented at the Institute on Religion and Democracy, "God Is Great. Is God Green? A Conference on Evangelicals and the Environmental Task," Washington D.C., November 14, 2007.

⁴¹ Wilkinson, *Between God and Green*, 59.

the progressive *Sojourners* and an original signer of the ECI, charged premillennialists with having “denigrated the importance of the natural world, giving wayward believers a false religious license for environmental destruction.” Wallis admitted he could not take such a view seriously implied that supposed “believers” in this eschatology were either delusional or dishonest.⁴² John Phelan, former president of North Park Theological Seminary, described such believers as a “sometimes noisy” group with a “perverse eschatological view.” A few leaders were willing admit that premillennialism did not *demand* an anti-environmental perspective, but still Wilkinson could only conclude after wrapping up her interviews most ECI leaders were actively working to “debunk” premillennialism and especially its dispensational strain.⁴³

The ECI’s decision to alienate premillennial evangelicals is all the more puzzling given that its opponents—chief among them being Beisner—were generally postmillennial post-Reconstructionists who saw Cizik and Ball’s work as a threat to their vision of dominion. However, with Haggard’s backing Cizik was largely untouchable, and with the NAE’s support the ECI appeared to be on solid ground. This did not stop Beisner and his allies from doing their best to undermine popular evangelical support for the ECI. Calling the ECI a “controversial push for radical environmental legislation,” *World* questioned how the Cizik/Ball group had developed its certainty given that science was “far too complex for certainty on either side.”⁴⁴ By July, Beisner and his Cornwall

⁴² Jim Wallis, *The Great Awakening* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2008), 136-137.

⁴³ Wilkinson, *Between God and Green*, 188.

⁴⁴ Mark Bergin, “Greener Than Thou,” *World* 21, no. 16 (April 22, 2006), 18-21.

Alliance had penned an open letter to each of the ECI signatories asking them to reconsider their participation. They then endorsed their own anti-climate initiative titled, “A Call to Truth, Prudence, and Protection of the Poor: An Evangelical Response to Global Warming.” In it Beisner argued that the ECI leadership had “good intentions,” but lacked a “sound understanding of relevant principles, theories, and facts.” He believed that his group could provide that understanding. While insisting that the Cornwall Alliance shared the same “Biblical worldview, theology, and ethics” as the ECI leadership, he contended that every scientific claim the ECI was based upon was “false, probably false, or exaggerated.” Instead of fighting climate change, the Cornwall Alliance proposed that evangelicals fight global poverty and do what they could to bring free markets and cheap (fossil) fuels to the developing world.⁴⁵

Along with Beisner’s Cornwall Alliance, *World* continued its opposition to the ECI as part of a larger push by the magazine to resist efforts to make environmentalism a bipartisan issue. By March the magazine was running cover articles detailing attempts by the Democratic Party to recast its policies (especially its environmental ones) in Christian-friendly terms.⁴⁶ The politicization of evangelical environmentalism grew tenuous that September when the EEN and Cizik joined other environmental organizations

⁴⁵ “An Open Letter to the Signers of “Climate Change: An Evangelical Call To Action” and Others Concerned About Global Warming,” *Cornwall Alliance* (July 25, 2006); E. Calvin Beisner and Ross McKittrick, *A Call to Truth, Prudence, and Protection of the Poor: An Evangelical Response to Global Warming* (Collierville, TN: Cornwall Alliance, 2006).

⁴⁶ Lynn Vincent, “Born Again?” *World* 21, no. 10 (March 11, 2006), 18-21.

in attending the Clinton Global Initiative.⁴⁷ Meanwhile at the Values Voters Summit that same month, Republican Senator James Inhofe singled out recent evangelical environmental efforts (alluding to the ECI) as a disingenuous plot by liberals to sow discord. In response, he called for those in the audience to instead join Beisner's Cornwall Alliance and then spread the "truth" about climate change to their local churches.⁴⁸ As the midterm elections neared, *World* would encourage its readers to resist Democratic wooing and warn that the party was hoping that an eleventh-hour focus on global warming would attract evangelical voters. The magazine admitted that evangelicals were divided on the issue but gave no quarter to those political strategists who believed that "a political union between Democratic environmentalists and evangelical creation-care advocates should have developed long ago."⁴⁹

Pat Robertson Lends Support

At the same time, the cause of evangelical environmentalism received an unexpected endorsement from a former presidential candidate and religious figure whose background contained both premillennial and Reconstructionist influences. In early August of 2006, Pat Roberts announced on his *700 Club* broadcast that recent heat waves had "converted" him to a belief in climate change. As recently as 2005, he had suspected

⁴⁷ The Clinton Global Initiative meeting was far from a strictly progressive event and Cizik was hardly the only conservative as others like Laura Bush, Colin Powell, and Rupert Murdoch were also in attendance.

⁴⁸ Wilkinson, *Between God and Green*, 65-84.

⁴⁹ Mark Bergin, "Green Days," *World* 21, no. 44 (November 4, 2006), 32-33.

Cizik of conspiring with “left-wing environmentalists,” but now he began to warn his massive television audience of the dangers of rising CO2 levels and melting icecaps.⁵⁰ Robertson had gone back and forth between environmental sympathy and antipathy over his career and, while such vacillations might appear as simply political maneuverings or indecision, a different picture emerges when set against the waxing and waning influence of Reconstruction. An exuberant premillennialist, Robertson launched his pioneering satellite ministry, the Christian Broadcasting Network, in 1961 and by the late 1970s he was beaming a message of environmental concern to millions of Americans. In 1977, he declared the energy to be real and lobbied for a “Manhattan Project” to switch the United States from its oil dependency to the use of renewable energy sources. According to historian Neall W. Pogue, Robertson’s eco-theology at this time resembled Francis Schaeffer’s in that humans occupied a double position in which they “should hold dominion over nature, but simultaneously hold nature in reverence because creation was not only a product of God, but humanity was part of creation.”⁵¹ By 1980, Robertson shared this Schaefferian eco-theology at the National Affairs Briefing, telling the audience that God had commanded dominion in the form of stewardship—“not to rape the environment, not to spoil the air and pollute the rivers, but to bring My world to the

⁵⁰ Adam Browning, “Rev. Pat Robertson Converts on Global Warming,” *Grist* (August 4, 2006); Lois K. Solomon, “God, Green Meet in the Middle,” *South Florida Sun-Sentinel* (March 1, 2007).

⁵¹ Neall W. Pogue, “The Religious Right’s Compassionate Steward and Conservationist: The Lost Philosophies of Pat Robertson, 1977-1989,” *Environmental Ethics* 38 (Winter, 2016), 486, 495.

peace and the harmony and the love and the order that I intended for it.”⁵² A few months later, Robertson was questioning the very technological progress which Reconstructionists saw as crucial to establishing dominion, telling viewers that humanity had created a “Frankenstein” through its advancing technologies and as a result had “raped the earth of its natural resources, polluted the air, poisoned the waters and exhausted our energy supplies through greed and indifference.”⁵³

However, by 1982 Robertson had come under the influence of Reconstructionism, Popularizing Rushdoony’s ideas of dominion in his book *The Secret Kingdom* that year. In contrast to the traditional premillennial belief that Satan possessed dominion over the Earth, he now taught that God wanted humanity to “repossess that original dominion”—subduing Satan and exercising a form of dominion that Robertson translated as “to trample under foot.”⁵⁴ Consequently, Robertson’s environmental concern faded over the decade as his political activity intensified and he launched his 1988 presidential bid. Pogue notes that during this time Robertson became convinced that the environmental movement was becoming a threat to American civilization and encouraging government overreach. Where environmental concerns did reemerge, they took on the language of Rushdoony’s Christian America revisionism. At the Republican National Convention in 1988, he declared that he saw the United States as “a city set on a hill...A city where the

⁵² Robertson quoted in Neall Pogue, “The Religious Right’s Compassionate Steward and Conservationist: The Lost Philosophies of Pat Robertson, 1977-1989,” *Environmental Ethics* 38 (Winter, 2016), 488.

⁵³ Pogue, “The Religious Right’s Compassionate Steward and Conservationist,” 490.

⁵⁴ Pat Robertson, *The Secret Kingdom* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 1982), 199-201.

water is pure to drink, the air clean to breathe, and the citizens respect and care for the soil, the forests, and God's other creatures."⁵⁵ Whereas he had once called technology an environmentally-destructive "Frankenstein," by 1990 he was warned that "environmental concerns may hinder technology and prove a front for massive new government spreading intrusion into our lives."⁵⁶ By the early 2000s, however, Robertson appeared to have once again distanced himself from Reconstructionist influences as evidenced by a renewed interest in prophecy and increased support for Israel (calling the Land for Peace program a "cruel chimera").⁵⁷ With voices like Robertson's now cheering them on, the ECI (despite its antagonism toward premillennialists) and its leaders appeared poised to secure the evangelical consensus that they had envisioned. This would be the movement's high-water mark.

The ECI Collapses

Early in November of 2006, reports that NAE president Ted Haggard had been engaged in sexual and drug-related activities with a male prostitute rocked the evangelical world. Haggard resigned immediately and suddenly Cizik's greatest defender against those evangelical leaders who opposed his work was gone. Mark Bergin at *World* immediately sensed the potential fallout of Haggard's absence, writing that "the greening

⁵⁵ Pogue, "The Religious Right's Compassionate Steward and Conservationist," 494.

⁵⁶ Pat Robertson, *The New Millennium: Ten Trends that Will Impact You and Your Family by the Year 2000* (Dallas, TX: Word Publishing, 1990), 209.

⁵⁷ Pat Robertson, "Pat Robertson," in Alan Dershowitz, ed., *What Israel Means to Me* (Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, 2006), 295.

of evangelicals could slow considerably without Haggard's presence in the national conversation."⁵⁸ Initially, however, this power vacuum appeared to Cizik as a blessing in disguise and, as the incoming Leith Anderson worked to get his feet on the ground as the NAE's new president, he pressed the organization to make even greater commitments to the ECI. Opponents of Cizik's work, sensing an opportunity and fearing a growing trend toward bipartisan environmentalism, raised their voices.

Within weeks of Haggard's resignation, Jerry Falwell began preaching that the ECI was giving theological cover to those pro-abortion groups that it was aligning with. Falwell reported that evangelical think tanks like the Institute on Religion & Democracy and the Acton Institute for the Study of Religion & Liberty believed the ECI was being "exploited" by abortion groups. For Falwell himself, his greatest concern was that "while the earth appears to have slightly warmed in recent years," he was skeptical that such a rise should be attributed to human activity and greatly appreciated the work of Beisner and his organization's wariness of "the politicization and bad science of global warming alarmism." He was also very annoyed at the "so-called major media" and their tendency to "trumpet" the actions of the ECI and similar progressive evangelical efforts while largely ignoring Beisner.⁵⁹ He would go on to declare the "endless hysteria" over climate change to be a myth that had "little to do with science and much to do with politics."⁶⁰

⁵⁸ Mark Bergin, "Out of the Dark," *World* 21, no. 44 (November 18, 2006), 38-39.

⁵⁹ Jerry Falwell, "Evangelicals and Global Warming," *World Net Daily* (November 18, 2006), <https://www.wnd.com/2006/11/38937/>.

⁶⁰ Jerry Falwell, "The Myth of Global Warming," sermon, Thomas Road Baptist Church, Lynchburg, VA (February 25, 2007).

The Southern Baptist Convention issued a statement that summer titled "On Global Warming" which drew from Beisner's arguments and opposed the kind of action supported by the ECI. The SBC urged its members to "proceed cautiously in the human-induced global warming debate."⁶¹ The most direct opposition to the ECI would come when several members of the Religious Right, led by James Dobson, write a letter to Anderson claiming that Cizik's work was "dividing and demoralizing the NAE and its leaders" as well as distracting from moral issues. They called for Cizik's resignation.⁶² Anderson rejected their demands and soon afterwards the NAE reaffirmed its 2004 "For the Health of the Nation" declaration along with its environmental commitments—but Anderson knew that he wouldn't be able to protect Cizik forever against growing opposition.

Cizik himself seems to have been unaware of just how precarious his position as the leading figure in the evangelical environmental movement had become. In January of 2007, he and Ball (along with Calvin DeWitt and Loren Wilkinson of the Au Sable Institute) had signed their names to "An Urgent Call to Action: Scientists and Evangelicals Unite to Protect Creation"—a declaration written in cooperation between the United Nations-affiliated Center for Health and the Global Environment and the NAE.⁶³ That summer Ball stood before the Senate's Environment and Public Works

⁶¹ "2007 SBC Resolution: 'On Global Warming'," *Baptist Press* (March 10, 2008), <https://www.baptistpress.com/resource-library/news/2007-sbc-resolution-on-global-warming/>.

⁶² "Dobson, Others Seek Ouster of NAE Vice President," *Christianity Today* (March 2, 2007), <https://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2007/marchweb-only/109-53.0.html>.

⁶³ Wilkinson, *Between God and Green*, 157-158.

Committee and implored them to “choose life this day by addressing global warming.” Shortly afterwards, the ECI delivered its “Principles for Federal Policy on Climate Change” document to Congress.⁶⁴ By early 2008, the SBC had even launched its own “Environment and Climate Initiative” and issued a declaration (“A Southern Baptist Declaration on the Environment and Climate Change”) which reversed much of the anti-climate change sentiment of its 2007 statement.

Evangelicalism was not entirely united behind the ECI’s work, though. That May a coalition of anti-environmental groups led by the Cornwall Alliance and including the Family Research Council, Belz’s *World* magazine, David Barton’s Wallbuilders, and the Acton Institute signed the “We Get It!” declaration opposing the ECI and asking senators to vote against all legislation requiring emissions cuts.⁶⁵ Others like Marvin Olasky would attempt to split the concerns of those younger evangelicals who were increasingly receptive to green pitches, asking if they had considered how “helping the poor and aggressively fighting global warming are at loggerheads?”⁶⁶ Still others like Tony Perkins attempted to cast suspicion on the ECI by reporting on “secret” comments made by

⁶⁴ “An Examination of the Views of Religious Organizations Regarding Global Warming,” *United States Senate* (June 7, 2007); Evangelical Climate Initiative, *Principles for Federal Policy on Climate Change* (Washington, DC: Evangelical Climate Initiative, 2007).

⁶⁵ Tom Strode, “‘We Get It!’ Environmental Campaign Launches with Goal to be Biblical, Factual,” *Baptist Press* (May 16, 2008), <https://www.baptistpress.com/resource-library/news/we-get-it-environmental-campaign-launches-with-goal-to-be-biblical-factual/>. Summing up much of the We Get It! perspective, David Barton told evangelicals that the solutions to large-scale problems “come not from government-implemented programs but rather from unfettered free-market solutions.”

⁶⁶ Marvin Olasky, “Compassionate Environmentalism,” *World* (November 1, 2007), <https://wng.org/articles/compassionate-environmentalism-1617289676>.

Richard Cizik at a World Bank meeting depicting him as someone in favor of coercive population control measures.⁶⁷ However, given Anderson's initial willingness to shield the ECI's works from Beisner's faction, Cizik had to feel remarkably confident in the future of his work as 2008 wound down. *Time* magazine had named him one the year's "100 Most Influential People" and Anderson had penned his entry.⁶⁸ Then Cizik made a costly miscalculation.

On December 2nd, Cizik joined NPR's Terry Gross for an episode of *Fresh Air*. During the show Gross asked if, given his ground-breaking work as an evangelical, what his thoughts were on Barack Obama's presidential campaign and proposals to legalize same-sex civil unions. While Cizik had, almost two decades earlier, lambasted the Bush Sr. administration for only supporting family values when it came to speeches and for declining the answer the "litmus test" on whether he would consider appointing a homosexual to his cabinet, his views had changed by 2008. Although he did not take a strong position in answering Gross's questions, he did insinuate that he supported to some degree both Obama's candidacy and the idea of civil unions. It was the end of Cizik's career. The outcry from those already opposed to Cizik's activism was immediate and deafening. The evangelical mainstream had been ready to embrace environmentalism. It

⁶⁷ Tony Perkins and Harry R. Jackson, Jr., *Personal Faith, Public Policy* (Lake Mary, FL: FrontLine, 2008), 213-214. Perkins also turned on the environmental scientist premillennialists had most respected and been the most eager to partner with: Paul Ehrlich. "Fortunately for us, Ehrlich was not a prophet," wrote Perkins, "Virtually nothing he wrote came to pass."

⁶⁸ Thomas B. Edsall, "Gay Rights and the Religious Right," *Washington Post* (August 10, 1992), <https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/politics/1992/08/10/gay-rights-and-the-religious-right/3d6472e9-f054-4650-a917-83d05d0f56e3/>; Leith Anderson, "Scientists & Thinkers: Eric Chivian & Richard Cizik," *Time* (May 12, 2008).

was not ready to accept the legal accommodation of same-sex couples or a candidate such as Obama. Anderson was unable to defend Cizik this time, saying that his “credibility as spokesperson for the NAE was irreparably compromised” by his answers on *Fresh Air*.⁶⁹ On December 11, Cizik resigned. Suddenly the NAE’s crucial support for the ECI and a mainstream evangelical movement that appeared to be on the cusp of radically transforming U.S. environmentalism as a whole became tenuous. The alliances Cizik had been instrumental in maintaining would soon dissolve. Within two years the ECI would, for all practical purposes, be dead in the water and evangelicalism as a whole would be transformed into the country’s most reliably anti-environmental voting bloc.

In the wake of Cizik departure, his opponents moved quickly to recast his green activism (and, by extension, the ECI) as always having represented only a “minority view” within evangelicalism. Beisner in particular was overjoyed and greeted the news “with applause.” He used the moment to attack both Cizik’s scientific and spiritual integrity. “The lesson is clear,” he told *World* reporters, “When we uncritically adopt the world’s agenda as our own, as Rev. Cizik did with global warming, it’s easy to see how confusion in one area can lead to others.”⁷⁰ The election of Barack Obama only served to deepen the evangelical mainstream’s now rapidly growing suspicion that political issues like environmentalism were, in fact, part of the “world’s agenda” and not causes for

⁶⁹ Sarah Pulliam, “Interview: NAE President Leith Anderson on Richard Cizik’s Resignation,” *Christianity Today* (December 11, 2008), <https://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2008/decemberweb-only/150-41.0.html>.

⁷⁰ Mark Bergin, “Richard Cizik Out,” *World* (December 13, 2008), <https://wng.org/sift/richard-cizik-out-1617252477>.

bipartisan support. Another blow to fading evangelical environmental movement came in November of 2009 with the leak of thousands of emails from a server at the Climate Research Unit at the University of East Anglia on the eve of the Copenhagen Climate Summit. Dubbed “Climategate,” the emails supposed revealed that climate change was an international hoax perpetuated by falsified data and pseudoscientific claims. Beisner used the scandal to declare that “a lot of the British journalists are now realizing, ‘We were suckered.’”⁷¹ The leaked emails became fodder for conservative talk radio for months and fueled the growing conservative skepticism of the environmental movement as a whole. In combination, the Cizik scandal, the inauguration of the Obama administration with its green agenda, and the Climate controversy greatly accelerated the anti-environmental turn among evangelicals. Ironically, even as the movement was collapsing, premillennialists continued to offer support. One writer for the *Church of God Evangel*, in criticizing the “throwaway” nature of American society, appealed directly to the NAE’s creation care declaration and Christians’ responsibility to “care for God’s earth.”⁷²

Beisner Presses His Advantage

Beisner, high on his string of victories and taking what amounted to a victory lap around evangelicalism, was even willing to let his Reconstructionist influences to show through at moments. When he accused pro-environmental evangelicals like Matthew

⁷¹ Daniel James Devine, “Boiling Over,” *World* (February 26, 2010), <https://wng.org/articles/boiling-over-1618067546>.

⁷² Lance Colkmire, “Cultural Current: Clunker Nation,” *Church of God Evangel* 99, no. 12 (December, 2009), 25.

Sleeth, Jonathan Merritt, Jim Ball, and even *The Green Bible* of distorting the Gospel, he did so on the basis that both he and the Cornwall Alliance agreed that human dominion was an Old Testament concept. Thus the proper relationship of humans toward the Creation was “not gospel—it’s law.”⁷³ As he celebrated, he seemed at times to have trouble keeping his own arguments straight. As coal increasing came under scrutiny for its role in increasing human deaths through air pollution, Beisner argued that such analysis was fatally flawed given how difficult it is to calculate the number of deaths produced by a single cause. However, shortly afterwards when new EPA regulations on emissions stalled, Beisner celebrated the delay precisely because it would “save lives.” Pivoting quickly again, he criticized the EEN “pro-life” campaign to protect the unborn from mercury exposure, arguing that they were “watering down” the meaning of lives saved.⁷⁴ He would go on to argue that hurricanes were not actually intensifying but rather their increasing destructiveness was simply the result of there being more coastal development for them to destroy—which was a good sign! Conversely, reducing carbon emissions and developing renewable energy sources was morally “wrong” given its

⁷³ E. Calvin Beisner, “Gospel Confusion in Christian Environmentalism,” *World* (May 29, 2012), <https://wng.org/articles/gospel-confusion-in-christian-environmentalism-1617286253>.

⁷⁴ Zachary Abate, “Coal Concerns,” *World* (May 27, 2011), <https://wng.org/sift/coal-concerns-1617430800>; E. Calvin Beisner, “Fatal Regulation,” *World* (October 4, 2011), <https://wng.org/articles/fatal-regulation-1618204296>; E. Calvin Beisner, “Obscuring the Meaning of ‘Pro-Life,’” *World* (December 19, 2011), <https://wng.org/articles/obscuring-the-meaning-of-pro-life-1617287765>; Beisner would go on to contend that “pro-life” efforts at mitigating mercury exposure were needless distractions given his personal estimations that mercury only affected one in a thousand births and “tiny amounts of radiation or toxics are harmless or even beneficial.” Daniel James Devine, “Risky Regulations,” *World* (January 2, 2012), <https://wng.org/articles/risky-regulations-1617307616>.

effects on the poor. In fact, he estimated that the rise in CO₂ since 1960 had added \$3.2 trillion in value through increased crop yields.⁷⁵

Sources of data were a particularly contentious issue for Beisner. He dismissed the NOAA's data as "unreliable" given that it was taken from buoy monitors and instead touted satellite as the most reliable. These satellites he claimed, "show there has been no global warming at all in the past 18 years." Two years later he dismissed the computer models which relied on this satellite data, saying scientists should get out into the real environment to take measurements but instead—like children playing video games—"inhabit a virtual reality that must not be mistaken for the real thing." Furthermore, such large-scale atmospheric measuring was unreliable given that the urban heat island effect "contaminates true temperature data, making the rise in global temperature appear higher than it truly is." In his estimate, almost fifty percent of the atmospheric warming registered by satellites was due to this distorting effect.⁷⁶

⁷⁵ E. Calvin Beisner, "Is Superstorm Sandy a Harbinger of the 'New Normal' Because of Global Warming?" *World* (November 6, 2012), <https://wng.org/articles/is-superstorm-sandy-a-harbinger-of-the-new-normal-because-of-global-warming-1617286117>; E. Calvin Beisner, "Green Energy Hurts The Poor," *World* (July 2, 2013), <https://wng.org/articles/green-energy-hurts-the-poor-1617286561>; Daniel James Devine, "Seeking A Better Climate For The World's Poor," *World* (September 18, 2014), <https://wng.org/sift/seeking-a-better-climate-for-the-worlds-poor-1617419794>.

⁷⁶ Julie Borg, "NOAA Scientists Claim to Plug Hole in Global Warming Theory," *World* (June 19, 2015), Available at <https://wng.org/sift/noaa-scientists-claim-to-plug-hole-in-global-warming-theory-1617426456>; E. Calvin Beisner, "Why Are Older Scientists More Likely to Doubt Climate Alarmism?" *Cornwall Alliance* (July 20, 2017), <https://cornwallalliance.org/2017/07/why-are-older-scientists-more-likely-to-doubt-climate-alarmism/>; Julie Borg, "Painting the Town to Fight Global Warming," *World* (April 19, 2018), <https://wng.org/roundups/are-robots-persons-too-now-1617228437>; Julie Borg, "Losing Sleep Over Global Warming," *World* (August 15, 2019), <https://wng.org/roundups/losing-sleep-over-global-warming-1617225222>.

Beyond parsing the debated details of climate change, Beisner's primary aim in all of his work was to ensure that the ECI remained ineffective and that evangelicals remained skeptical toward climate change as a whole. In 2010, the Cornwall Alliance released a DVD and small group Bible study series titled *Resisting the Green Dragon* which promised to help evangelicals learn the truth about "the greatest deceptions of our day." As Beisner explained: "The religious and political environmental movement—what we call the 'Green Dragon'—has become one of the greatest threats to society and the church in our day."⁷⁷ Distributed by Gary DeMar's American Vision, *Resisting the Green Dragon* represented the culmination of Reconstructionist anti-environmentalism—combining the cornucopianism of Beisner's mentor Julian Simon with the anti-paganism philosophy of Rushdoony and the free-market gospel (and conspiratorial mindset) of Gary North. A year later, Beisner cheered reports from a LifeWay Research poll on the eve of Earth Day that there had been an increase of over fifty percent in those Protestant pastors who strongly disagreed with the statement "I believe global warming is real and manmade" from 2008 (27%) to 2010 (41%).⁷⁸ Still not content to rest, Beisner led the Cornwall Alliance in drafting a letter to Pope Francis just prior to his acclaimed encyclical *Laudato Si: On Care For Our Common Home*. In their letter, Beisner stressed

⁷⁷ Cornwall Alliance, *Resisting the Green Dragon: A 12-Part DVD Series with Discussion Guide* (Burke, VA: Cornwall Alliance for the Stewardship of Creation, 2010).

⁷⁸ E. Calvin Beisner, "First-Person: Revisiting 'Climate Change Denialism'," *Baptist Press* (April 19, 2011), <https://www.baptistpress.com/resource-library/news/first-person-revisiting-climate-change-denialism/>.

the need to improve conditions for the poor and thus "it is both unwise and unjust to adopt policies requiring reduced use of fossil fuels for energy."⁷⁹

Not content with their victory over the ECI, in 2015 *World* magazine began investigating the funding sources of green evangelical efforts and insinuating diabolical links between organizations like the EEN and the anti-human agendas of more secular groups. Beisner openly wondered how aware EEN leadership was of the “Machiavellian” designs groups like the Rockefeller Brothers Fund (who supported abortion access) when they accepted funding from them. Other reporters similarly pointed to pro-abortion groups who had donated to green evangelicals, acknowledging that while “no hard rules exist against evangelical organizations accepting left-wing financial support, such funds could raise questions about who is influencing their agenda.”⁸⁰ On December 7 that year, the anti-environmental film *Climate Hustle* premiered in Paris to coincide with the 2015 U.N. Climate Change Conference. It was produced by the Committee for a Constructive Tomorrow—an organization for which Beisner served as a board member.

Premillennialism Turns Anti-Environmental

Perhaps the greatest proof of the influence Beisner and other anti-environmental evangelical voices wielded in the wake of the ECI’s 2008 collapse was the shift that occurred within the pages of premillennial prophecy books. Prior to the mid-2000s,

⁷⁹ E. Calvin Beisner, “An Open Letter to Pope Francis on Climate Change,” *Cornwall Alliance* (April 27, 2015), <https://cornwallalliance.org/anopenlettertopopefrancisonclimatechange/>.

⁸⁰ Beisner, “Obscuring the Meaning of ‘Pro-Life’”; Daniel James Devine, “Rolling In Green,” *World* 30, no. 12 (June 13, 2015), 73-74.

premillennial writers had rarely expressed skepticism toward environmental scientists or interpreted prophetic passages as showing how environmentalism might fulfill satanic purposes in the End Times. In 1981, an obscure premillennial writer named Mike Russ had published an unremarkable paperback billed by its publishers as being “in the tradition of Hal Lindsey” in which he had speculated that the Antichrist might rise to power by offering solutions to “the pressing problems of society and the environment.”⁸¹ Russ gave no indication of being opposed to environmentalism in his pages and it would be another thirty years before the idea of the Antichrist as an environmentalist would resurface.

The first evidence that Reconstructionist-inspired anti-environmentalism was overtaking premillennial environmentalism came in 1998 with *Fore Warning*. Published by Harvest House, a charismatic Pentecostal publisher, the volume contained a mix of Dominionist charismatics and premillennial authors. However, the environmental sensitivity that premillennialists had displayed since the writings of the Reverend John Cumming in the 1850s fell strangely silent—overshadowed by a wave of Dominionist essays attacking such concerns. Premillennial eschatology, the last theological shelter for serious ecological consideration within conservative evangelicalism, had been overrun. Now, in a volume in which every essay carried a weather-themed title, such consideration came under direct fire. Its editor, William T. James declared that humans were to “serve God, not our planet” and wanted of the “globalist agenda” of the United Nations and

⁸¹ Mike Russ, *The Battle for Planet Earth: From Abraham to Armageddon* (New York, NY: Ballantine Books, 1981), 12.

environmentalist groups which threatened U.S. sovereignty.⁸² One author wrote that the Bible had been turned upside down by those misguided Christians who now valued the lives of rocks and rats “more than they value precious God-given human life.” This author rejected the notion that Americans consumed too much and predicted that if anything, it would be “sustainable development” that would be the precursor to the Mark of Beast as all buying and selling becomes increasingly monitored.⁸³ In the most thorough denunciation of environmentalism, Christopher Corbett—a political writer and not a theologian—went issue by issue declaring on the basis of singular data points that global warming, ozone holes, acid rain, deforestation, species extinction, pollution, and overpopulation were nothing more than “eco-hysteria.” Those promoting such causes were waging “environmental jihad” and had marked those like Corbett who questioned their science as “the Environmental Jew” and given them their “public badge of shame.”⁸⁴ Most duplicitous of all, the cover and marketing of *Fore Warning* were clearly intended to attract premillennial readers. Its cover art matched the dramatic storms scenes used on the covers of premillennial (and ecologically sensitive) books by Graham and others. Its cover also listed the names of a handful of featured authors—all well-known

⁸² William T. James, “Introduction: Earth’s Stormy Horizon,” in William T. James, ed., *Fore Warning: Approaching the Final Battle between Heaven & Hell* (Eugene, OR: Harvest House, 1998), 17-18.

⁸³ Daymond R. Duck, “Harbingers of Humanism’s Hurricane,” in William T. James, ed., *Fore Warning: Approaching the Final Battle between Heaven & Hell* (Eugene, OR: Harvest House, 1998), 73-75, 79-80.

⁸⁴ Christopher Corbett, “Energy, Ecology, Economy: A Foreboding Forecast,” in William T. James, ed., *Fore Warning: Approaching the Final Battle between Heaven & Hell* (Eugene, OR: Harvest House, 1998), 274-276, 286-287.

premillennialists. Yet any reader opening its pages in search of the prophetic meaning of the literal storms raging across the planet was only met with the denial that such storms were anything unusual at all and that efforts to address climate change should be fervently resisted in defense of national sovereignty.

Even still, overt anti-environmentalism among premillennial prophecy books remained rare. One of the few examples came in 2000 when David Reagan, an incredibly patriotic premillennialist, presented environmentalism as a completely pagan activity. In his *Living for Christ in the End Times*, he described such activism as a new religion in which adherents worshipped by “hugging a tree or stroking a salmon” and, in further deviation from traditional premillennial works, made no mention of Christian stewardship responsibilities.⁸⁵ The following year another writer would affirm the reality of climate change, stating that there was a scientific consensus that global warming was due to greenhouse gases and calling it a threat to humanity’s survival. However, this affirmation would be overshadowed by his repeating warnings that environmentalism was merely a vehicle of the consolidation of U.N. power through Agenda 21-type programs as well as a new avenue for paganism.⁸⁶ It would be several years before a well-known premillennial prophecy writer would address environmentalism at all. Then, in 2007, Tim LaHaye and Ed Hindson published *Global Warning*—a somewhat strange work in which they accepted even the most outlandish and tenuously supported scientific

⁸⁵ David Reagan, *Living for Christ in the End Times: Balancing Today with the Hope of Tomorrow* (Green Forest, AR: New Leaf Press, 2000)

⁸⁶ Jim Simmons, *The Last Hour: Prophecy, World Views & UFO's* (Lima, OH: Fairway Press, 2001), 50-51, 100-101.

speculations as to the effects of nuclear weapons and EMPs while utterly rejecting any and all scientific reports on climate change. Whereas Lindsey had warned of how the rise of even a single degree in the global temperature average could have destructive effects on the world's farm belts given the sensitivity of agriculture, LaHaye and Dobson dismissed the issues on the grounds that "according to the latest non-United Nations endorsed, nonpoliticized data, global mean temperatures have increased only one degree Fahrenheit over the past century."⁸⁷ On the basis of a single author they denied that any scientific consensus exists on climate change, writing that "any thinking person is certainly concerned about the possibility of global warming, but we insist that such concerns be based on real facts, not political hype." In contrast to tradition premillennialism, the authors tell readers that the Earth will be destroyed by fire as "the Earth is not our final destiny...Our real destiny is our eternal home in heaven."⁸⁸

The following year, D. James Kennedy (one of the original premillennial signers of the Coalition on Revival manifesto and worldview documents) published *How Would Jesus Vote?*—an evangelical guide to political activism. While not specifically devoted to prophecy, the book represented an incredible reversal for Kennedy who had previously devoted entire issues of his Coral Ridge Ministries' magazine to the subject of Christian environmental stewardship. Now he issued a forceful denial of any so-called scientific claims regarding climate. In doing so, Kennedy openly cited Rushdoony while also

⁸⁷ Tim LaHaye and Ed Dobson, *Global Warning: Are We on the Brink of World War III?* (Eugene, OR: Harvest House, 2007), 54.

⁸⁸ LaHaye and Dobson, *Global Warning*, 58, 287-288.

acknowledging that much of his chapter, “The Environment and Climate Change,” was based on a report prepared by the Acton Institute for the Study of Religion and Liberty—the same institute for which Beisner had worked. Calling it “simply human hubris” to imagine that humans could influence atmospheric conditions, Kennedy declared that “God made the world, and it does not hang in the balance.”⁸⁹ He then proceeded to name those evangelical leaders who had signed the ECI and shamed them for misleading the public into thinking that environmentalism was a mainstream evangelical concern. In turn, he proudly declared his support of the Cornwall Alliance and presented its skepticism to readers as more representative of evangelical attitudes. He then warned readers that environmentalists were calling for “Nuremberg” trials for deniers, that the free-market has been the best solution to pollution, and chided those “unwise” premillennialists who “fall prey to alarmist messages” on account of their “apocalyptic mentality.”⁹⁰

The most dramatic pivot toward anti-environmentalism among premillennial prophecy writers came in 2010 when Tim LaHaye and Craig Parshall (whose wife Janet Parshall had signed Beisner’s *We Get It!* declaration and was an active supporter of the Cornwall Alliance) published the first novel in their *The End* series. Whereas LaHaye’s *Left Behind* series had relatively little commentary on earthbound politics prior to the rise of the Antichrist and even less to say about environmentalism, in their *The End* novels

⁸⁹ D. James Kennedy and Jerry Newcombe, *How Would Jesus Vote? A Christian Perspective on the Issues* (Colorado Springs, CO: WaterBook Press, 2008), 133.

⁹⁰ Kennedy and Newcombe, *How Would Jesus Vote?*, 133-134, 143.

LaHaye and Parshall offered pointed political commentary of real-world figures like Barack Obama and centered the satanic plot of their new Antichrist around a One-World religion based on environmentalism.⁹¹ Taking a page from Larry Burkett's Reconstructionist-inspired fiction, *The End* focuses on the heroics of a computer genius and weapons designer who develops the world's most advanced missile defense system and must protect his technology from international forces. Deeply concerned with the erosion of U.S. sovereignty, the wealthy and well-connected hero hosts clandestine meetings with other Christian social and political elites as they attempt to exercise dominion over American culture and restore its godly heritage. The first novel ends with the devout, but prophetically-ignorant protagonist visiting his wife's premillennial church and hearing a sermon—complete with references to interpretations by real-world premillennialists like John Walvoord—on the signs of the approaching End Times. However, in stark contrast to traditional premillennialism, this fictional sermon makes no mention of ecological disasters and instead focuses on the agents of “globalism” (George Soros is mentioned by name) seeking to undermine national sovereignty.⁹²

LaHaye and Parshall revealed their core political concerns over the course of the series' remaining three novels. The second begins with a low-level researcher discovering

⁹¹ LaHaye and Parshall's *The End* series was not the first example of premillennial fiction linking environmentalism to the Antichrist's rise to power. In 1998, Marlin Maddoux published *Seal of Gaia*, which featured a remarkably similar plot. Much like in *The End* series, Maddoux's Antichrist gains global control through by championing the protection the environment (“Gaia”) and before immediately enacting the systematic extermination of all opponents. However, *Seal of Gaia* attracted little attention in the late 1990s and sold poorly.

⁹² Tim LaHaye and Craig Parshall, *Edge of Apocalypse* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2010), 195-202.

that “catastrophic global warming had finally kicked into overdrive”—but as a result of increasing volcanic activity rather than anthropogenic greenhouse gases. The scientific establishment quickly moves to cover up the data as the churches of the world convene to establish a new religion committed to saving the planet. Under the banner of “One Plane—One God—One Climate Mission,” the leader of this new global faith pledges to “finish the work of Jesus and redeem the climate.”⁹³ Political leaders are eager to promote the new Church’s teachings in order to seize control of industry in the name of regulating emissions. However, they face subversive opposition for the protagonist and his dominion-minded cadre who, armed with prophetic foreknowledge, remain committed to the “business of revolution—a moral and political revolution in America—from the top down, starting with the federal government and the White House.”⁹⁴ By the final novel, the series had received high praise from conservative politicians like Mike Huckabee. In its final twist, the leader of the ecological church (known as the “One Movement”—a nod to monism, the pagan idea Reconstructionism had long charged the environmental movement of harboring) emerges as the Antichrist. As LaHaye and Parshall imagined,

⁹³ Tim LaHaye and Craig Parshall, *Thunder of Heaven* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011), 32, 157-159, 257-258; That same year, Mark Hitchcock also wrote that the kind of global centralization exemplified by climate conferences was leading some premillennialist to wonder if such a trend would lead to the Antichrist. Mark Hitchcock, *Who Is The Antichrist?: Answering the Question Everyone is Asking* (Eugene, OR: Harvest House, 2011); Other premillennialists began to see the environmental movement as more pagan than political, with some like Skip pointing to the “environmental atheism today that essentially worships Mother Nature” and Gary Frazier describing such activism as “more of a religion based on earth worship than a political movement.” Skip Heitzig, *You Can Understand the Book of Revelation* (Eugene, OR: Harvest House, 2011); Gary Frazier, *It Could Happen Tomorrow: Future Events That Will Shake The World* (Green Forest, AR: New Leaf Press, 2012), 114.

⁹⁴ Tim LaHaye and Craig Parshall, *Brink of Chaos* (Grand Rapids, MI: 2012), 51-53.

fears of global warming brought such a rise to power into the realm of possibility and, following the Rapture of those Christians who had been wise enough to resist such eco-spirituality, the satanic tyrant deploys his environmental police to seize businesses around the globe and establish his authoritarian regime (along with committing murder with his bare, supernaturally-enhanced hands).⁹⁵

Attempting to link LaHaye and Marshall's fictional account to the real world, Grant Jeffrey (who claimed to have assisted in the creation of the original recycling symbol) believed he had uncovered "the hidden, sinister political agenda of an elite group" which he claimed was "built on lies, manipulated research, the destruction of historical temperature data, and the intimidation and silencing of climate-change critics."⁹⁶ Comparing environmentalism to Nazi Germany, Japanese militarism, and Communism, Jeffrey insisted that the "threat to our fundamental liberties from the global-warming deception is just as dangerous" and warned readers of the shadowy political agenda to install "a centralized, worldwide socialist-Marxist government" which derives its power through environmental regulations.⁹⁷ Declaring climate change to be "the greatest fraud in the history of science," Jeffrey cited climate change skeptics like Roy Spencer and Bjorn Lomborg (popular with Reconstructionists like Beisner) while

⁹⁵ Tim LaHaye and Craig Parshall, *The Mark of Evil* (Grand Rapids, MI: 2014), 312-313.

⁹⁶ Grant R. Jeffery, *The Global-Warming Deception: How A Secret Elite Plans to Bankrupt America and Steal Your Freedom* (Colorado Springs, CO: WaterBook, 2011), 7, 10-11.

⁹⁷ Jeffery, *The Global-Warming Deception*, 13, 16.

identifying environmental scientist Paul Ehrlich as a false prophet.⁹⁸ Whatever minor global warming *has* taken place, Jeffrey assured readers, has merely been the result of volcanic activity and those scientific experts claiming otherwise should be doubted given that “computer climate models are too crude to accurately predict climate change.” On top of this, even if significant anthropogenic global warming *was* occurring, history showed that humans have prospered when global temperatures have risen and suffered when they have fallen.⁹⁹ Echoing LaHaye and Parshall, Jeffrey stated that humanity “does not possess the power to destroy the earth” and that the new “environmental religion” is antithetical to capitalism and the fulfillment of the “Mystery Babylon” religion of Revelation. In the vein of Beisner’s cornucopianism, he argued that “all the resources that God has provided for humanity’s needs are either renewable or practically inexhaustible.”¹⁰⁰

For premillennialists who wanted to acknowledge the *possibility* that global warming was occurring without lending credence to the environmental movement, volcanoes and other non-anthropogenic sources became convenient explanations. In Paul Crouch’s exploration of the “Bible Code,” he reinterpreted several prophecies that his peers had, since the late 1960s, connected directly to pollution and human-induced

⁹⁸ Jeffery, *The Global-Warming Deception*, 44, 65, 96, 249. Jeffrey also discusses the work of John Houghton with the IPCC, but carefully avoids mentioning Houghton’s own evangelical background.

⁹⁹ Jeffery, *The Global-Warming Deception*, 48-49, 88-89, 96, 102.

¹⁰⁰ Jeffery, *The Global-Warming Deception*, 241, 258, 260-264, 286.

climate change as to now be fulfilled through massive volcanic eruptions.¹⁰¹ LaHaye, Parshall, and Jeffrey helped to further popularize the idea and soon volcanoes began to appear regularly in books by premillennialists who would have likely been as receptive to environmentalists' claims as Lindsey and Graham had been. Perry Stone was amenable to the possibility that the climate was changing, but believed that if it was occurring in fulfillment of prophecy that it was almost certainly due to super volcanoes. Such calderas he wrote, "can rain hellfire across thousands of miles and cause worldwide climate changes."¹⁰² One premillennial writer believed that super volcanoes could resolve one of the oldest conundrums faced by American evangelicals—where was there no mention of the United States in prophecy? According to this writer, the reason for the Bible's silence regarding the world's present superpower is that the United States will be destroyed beforehand by a massive eruption—likely the Yellowstone caldera—that will set the stage for the End times.¹⁰³ Another writer looked beyond the Earth rather than within it to explain how the climate might be changing. They claimed that "solar dimming" (and the subsequent *cooling* of the Earth) was occurring in accordance with prophecies that the

¹⁰¹ Paul F. Crouch, *The Shadow of the Apocalypse: When All Hell Breaks Loose* (New York, NY: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 2004), 158-161.

¹⁰² Perry Stone, *Deciphering End-Times Prophetic Codes* (Lake Mary, FL: Charisma House, 2015), 100.

¹⁰³ L. A. Marzulli, "Great Deception," in Sid Roth, ed., *Sooner Than You Think: A Prophetic Guide to the End Times* (Shippensburg, PA: Destiny Image, 2015), 52-53.

sun and stars would be dimmed and that climate change was merely a financially-lucrative cover-up.¹⁰⁴

Nary A Remnant

In the years since the heated debate surrounding the hope and collapse of the Evangelical Climate Initiative, most premillennialists have simply chosen to ignore the issue. Indicative of the success of groups like the Cornwall Alliance, readers of premillennial publications have given little indication of wanting to know the potential prophetic significance of climate change. When the *Church of God Evangel*—the publication that had openly appealed to the Creation care declarations of the NAE and EEN in 2009— conducted a poll asking readers which issue would most influence their vote in the upcoming 2012 election, 0.0% selected the “Environmental Concerns”

¹⁰⁴ Carl Gallups, *Final Warning: Understanding the Trumpet Days of Revelation* (Washington, DC: WND Books, 2014); Gallups’ prophetic interpretations were frequently at odds with other premillennialists as he believed that humanity was presently living through the Trumpet Judgements of Revelation prior to the Rapture and the rise of the Antichrist. His close friend David Reagan (whom he thanked in his book) was not afraid to publicly disagree with him, calling his interpretations confused and “off-the-wall.” David Reagan, “A Confused Book about Revelation,” *Christ In Prophecy Journal* (January 27, 2015), <https://christinprophecyblog.org/2015/01/a-confused-book-about-revelation/>; Others like Mark Hitchcock became preoccupied with the “blood moons” prophecies which claimed to find a “correlation between when blood moons fell on Jewish feast days and key historical world events involving the Jewish people.” Whereas earlier premillennialists had been eager to focus their prophetic attention on man-made environmental disasters, now those like Hitchcock chose to focus on astronomical and tectonic signs which appeared far beyond the influence of humans. Mark Hitchcock, *Blood Moons Rising: Bible Prophecy, Israel, and the Four Blood Moons* (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House, 2014), x.

option.¹⁰⁵ Mike Evans, whose 1986 book *The Return* placed environmental concerns at the center of its prophetic analysis, surveyed the full breadth of the “demonic” forces assaulting the United States in 2015 but made no mention (positive or negative) of environmentalism.¹⁰⁶ Despite publishing frequently, the best-selling David Jeremiah has made a habit of avoiding the issue. In his 2008 *What In The World Is Going On? 10 Prophetic Clues You Cannot Afford to Ignore*—precisely the kind of premillennial prophecy book that would have previously included extensive discussions of pollution and climate change—Jeremiah made no mention of environmentalism other than to briefly note that renewable energy technologies have proven costlier than many estimated.¹⁰⁷ Similarly, in his 2010 *The Coming Economic Armageddon: What Bible Prophecy Warns about the New Global Economy*, Jeremiah described the Copenhagen emissions treaty as a U.N.-driven attempt to assert authority over the United States before

¹⁰⁵ “September Evangel Poll: Which Issue Will Influence Your Vote The Most In The Upcoming National Election?” *Church of God Evangel* 102, no. 10 (October, 2012), 5; The popular premillennial prophecy website *Christ In Prophecy Journal* also regularly polled visitors on which issues drew their interest. In its 2009 poll asking visitors to identify the greatest threat to the United States, “global warming” received less than 1% of the votes—coming in behind “Adam Sandler movies”—while the United States’ “stance on Israel” came in first with 39%. In its 2010 poll asking visitors to identify the greatest global threat, “climate change” received the fewest votes of any option with “nuclear Iran” receiving the most. However, the blog’s host could not ignore the extreme weather that 2010 produced, reluctantly concluding: “Whatever the claimed reasons behind the weather gone mad, 2010 ended up being an extremely bad year for weather-related disasters and deaths.” Nathan E. Jones, “The Biggest Threat to the U.S.A.,” *Christ In Prophecy Journal* (July 20, 2009), <https://christinprophecyblog.org/2009/07/biggest-threat-to-usa/>; Nathan Jones, “Biggest World Challenge of 2010,” *Christ In Prophecy Journal* (December 30, 2010), <https://christinprophecyblog.org/2010/12/biggest-world-challenge-of-2010/>.

¹⁰⁶ Mike Evans, *Satan, You Can’t Have Me Country: A Spiritual Warfare Guide To Save America* (Phoenix, AZ: TimeWorthy Books, 2015).

¹⁰⁷ David Jeremiah, *What In The World Is Going On? 10 Prophetic Clues You Cannot Afford to Ignore* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2008), 32-33.

quickly moving on to other topics.¹⁰⁸ By 2019, Jeremiah feel more comfortable discussing the prophetic implications of Bitcoin than global warming.¹⁰⁹

Still, a few prophecy writers would continue to carry the torch of premillennial environmentalism forward briefly before the sputtering out. Dave Hunt, just three years before his death, returned briefly to the issue of environmentalism in his 2010 *Cosmos, Creator and Human Destiny* in which he once again found himself calling for reason in the midst of two opposing factions. This time he rebuked both the growing anti-science attitudes of evangelicals and the “cocky” attitudes of overly-confident atheist scientists. In contrast to other conservative evangelicals who attacked the IPCC and conveniently ignored the contributions of Sir John Houghton, Hunt describes Houghton as one of the “brightest scientists in history” and holds up his work with the IPCC as an example of the kind of humble science that should characterize all such work.¹¹⁰ Near the end of his book, Hunt expanded on the evangelical environmental ethic he had begun working out in the mid-1990s, reasoning that:

One cannot logically believe in both evolution and the environmental...If man, as a result of the evolution of his brain and nervous system, succeeds in destroying the earth in a nuclear holocaust or ecological disaster, that must be accepted as a natural act in the evolving universe...The mere fact that man can reason about

¹⁰⁸ David Jeremiah, *The Coming Economic Armageddon: What Bible Prophecy Warns about the New Global Economy* (New York, NY: Faith Words, 2010), 31-32.

¹⁰⁹ David Jeremiah, *The Book of Signs: 31 Undeniable Prophecies of the Apocalypse* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2019), 406.

¹¹⁰ Dave Hunt, *Cosmos, Creator and Human Destiny: Answering Darwin, Dawkins, and the New Atheists* (Bend, OR: Berean Call, 2010), 37.

ecology and the survival of species is proof enough that he is not the product of such forces.¹¹¹

By this point in Hunt's career, his concern for the Creation emerged less from eschatology than from apologetics and evangelism. The existence of environmental concern implied the existence of a Creator while evangelicals acting upon that concern demonstrated a faithfulness to that Creator before the eyes of an unbelieving world. It would be Hunt's final commentary on the issue.

Where premillennial environmental did appear in the years following 2010, it was but a distant echo of earlier writers and often in the form of reprinted passages carried over into largely repackaged prophecy manuscripts carrying new titles. One writer named Ron Rhodes did continue to acknowledge the reality of human-induced climate change ("Humanity is on a collision course with geology") and even warned that Americans could no longer "build our society on the ideology of endless growth." In the conclusion of his 2011 book *The Coming Oil Storm*, he encouraged evangelicals to "vote for government officials who are committed to making a difference on energy issues."¹¹² However, subsequent prophecy books by Rhodes would, at best, only briefly mention environmental concerns when listing general global threats or would fail to acknowledge

¹¹¹ Hunt, *Cosmos, Creator and Human Destiny*, 384-386.

¹¹² Ron Rhodes, *The Coming Oil Storm* (Eugene, OR: Harvest House, 2010), 50, 155, 171-172.

such issues at all.¹¹³ Similarly, the bestselling premillennial prophecy popularizer since 2010—David Jeremiah—has adamantly refused to engage in the kind of “newspaper exegesis” that had given earlier writers their pro-environmental and countercultural relevancy. Even when collaborating with C. C. Carlson, Lindsey’s coauthor for *The Late Great Planet Earth*, Jeremiah’s books have been virtually silent on any issues even tangentially related to the environmental crisis.¹¹⁴

Following a similar trajectory, the movement to mobilize evangelicals for environmental action since the ECI’s collapse has fractured and withered. A few organizations like Jam Ball’s Flourish have attempted to split the difference between the ECI’s activism and the Cornwall Alliance’s skepticism, but with little success. Richard Cizik’s own work has since pivoted from environmentalism to the reformation of evangelical politics broadly through a new organization known as Evangelicals For Democracy. A younger generation of believers has taken up some of this slack and formed organizations such as Young Evangelicals for Climate Action which have seen growth, but have yet to make their mark on American politics. Meanwhile evangelical climate scientists such as Katharine Hayhoe have continued in the tradition of Sir John

¹¹³ See Ron Rhodes, *End-Times Super Trends* (Eugene, OR: Harvest House, 2017); Ron Rhodes, *Jesus and the End Times: What He Said...and What the Future Holds*. Eugene, OR: Harvest House, 2019; Ron Rhodes, *New Babylon Rising: The Emerging End Times World Order* (Eugene, OR: Harvest House, 2019); Ron Rhodes, *Spiritual Warfare in the End Times* (Eugene, OR: Harvest House, 2020).

¹¹⁴ David Jeremiah, *The World of the End: How Jesus’ Prophecy Shapes Our Priorities* (Nashville, TN: W Publishing, 2022); David Jeremiah and C. C. Carlson, *The Handwriting on the Wall* (Nashville, TN: Word Publishing, 2019); Even Jeremiah’s bombastically titled *After The Rapture: An End Times Survival Guide* avoids engaging with relevant political, scientific, and environmental issues to instead focus on evangelism and piety.

Houghton, though with less eagerness to engage the faith's more conservative or missions-oriented branches.¹¹⁵ As of 2023, nary a remnant of premillennial environmentalism remains and any significant action in the future by evangelicalism broadly will first require a revival of such concern among its grassroots.

Two decades before the collapse of the ECI, the hard pivot by evangelicalism away from environmentalism and Hunt's final words, a geographer named Janel Curry-Roper had recognized that different forms of evangelical millennialism could produce fundamentally different attitudes toward the Creation in the present. Where Lynn White Jr. had once said that the way we think about nature is "deeply conditioned" by our religion, Curry-Roper narrowed this further to argue that *specific* branches of theology—namely eschatology—shaped one's approach to ecology.¹¹⁶ Importantly, she recognized that attempts to force new beliefs upon religious communities would be too ineffective (and morally questionable) to deliver the kind of response demanded by the present crisis. She instead encouraged doing the hard work necessary to uncover existing beliefs and practices capable of sustaining environmental sensitivity and then encouraging those doctrines—regardless of how alien they might appear. To persuade evangelicals to join the effort to restore the Creation, she reasoned, "we must find those aspects of belief systems that resonate with concern over climate change, and then argue from those

¹¹⁵ Houghton was a frequent speaker and contributor to the Lausanne Movement.

¹¹⁶ Janel M. Curry-Roper, "Contemporary Christian Eschatologies and their relation to environmental stewardship," *The Professional Geographer* 42, no. 2 (1990): 157-196.

positions...we need to accept a diverse range of on-the-ground strategies.”¹¹⁷ Few belief systems in recent decades have been more “diverse” than premillennialism and yet even fewer have resonated in tune with the most dire predictions by leading environmental scientists more so than the apocalyptic hope of millions of conservative evangelicals. However, given the enduring appeal (or political convenience) of the End Times Apathy Hypothesis, even among many evangelicals, it remains to be seen whether environmentalists will again be willing to partner with premillennialists as they once did. Given the incredible political sway these believers continue to hold over American responses to climate change and other threats, the key to avoiding an environmental apocalypse may very well be to encourage evangelicals to rediscover their apocalyptic environmentalism.

¹¹⁷ Curry, “Christians and Climate Change,” 163.

EPILOGUE: “LIVING RESPONSIBLY ON THE EDGE OF TIME AND ETERNITY”

In February of 2023, I sat in a conference room at Arizona State University and listened to the former vice president of the Sierra Club repeat verbatim the narrative of the End Times Apathy Hypothesis. Evangelicals, he preached, were unwilling to care about the environment precisely because of their End Times beliefs—calloused, otherworldly beliefs compounded by “collective narcissism” and “smug self-righteousness.” It was a harsh and brutal sermon. One which the presenter had developed on the basis of four years of attending conservative evangelical churches. At no point in those four years, he claimed, did he discover “even a hint of environmental concern” among the sermons and potlucks he attended. The markedly non-evangelical crowd of gathered religious studies scholars listened with morbid fascination to a topic which the moderator would describe as “dark fun.” Discussing the links between evangelicalism and both Far Right politics and anti-environmentalism provoked feelings in the audience ranging from titillation to disgust, with one member asking during the Q&A session if those studying evangelicalism felt as though they needed to “wash in bleach” after working with their subjects. Absent from the presentation was any attempt to place such observations within their historical context and explore how the dominant attitude of anti-environmentalism developed among such a diverse and individualistic faith. (Also absent was any effort to understand evangelicals *as people*.) Instead, this well-credentialed environmentalist presented the faith of tens of millions of Americans as a monolithic

obstacle to any form of care toward the Creation and one, by its very nature, beholden to not only anti-environmentalism but xenophobia, bigotry, and a multitude of other threats to democracy.¹

Premillennialism, despite its anti-environmental turn, remains less homogenous than secular environmentalists might like to imagine. As a discernible movement, it hardly offers a coherent position on issues pertaining to science and environmentalism. In 2020, David Reagan told readers that it is “rather obvious that God is shouting at us through increasing natural disasters that ‘Jesus is coming soon!’” However, when a reader asked “what is the prophetic significance of Global Warming,” his immediate reply was that “the whole concept is a political ploy which liberals are using in an attempt to gain greater control over society.”² In general though, premillennialists have set aside their “newspaper exegesis” in recent years and with it many of their potent countercultural critiques of American life. A few exceptions still appear. Mark Hitchcock’s *Corona Crisis* (2020) discussed the reality of the COVID-19 virus and the

¹ Bernard Zaleha, “Intense Apocalypticism, Collective Narcissism, and Hellfire Extremism with the Calvary Chapel Movement: A Review of New Data Revealing Strong Barriers to Climate Change Concern,” lecture for the International Society for the Study of Religion, Nature, and Culture. Tempe, AZ: Arizona State University, 2023; Zaleha is not alone in his assessment. Recently a broader psychological study of evangelicals arrived at the same diagnosis of “collective narcissism” while another scholar—linking dispensationalism to recent episodes of political violence—called for increased government surveillance and IRS audits of evangelicals pastors which they believe represent a fundamental threat to democracy. Dave Verhaagen, *How White Evangelicals Think: The Psychology of White Conservative Christians* (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2022); David W. Opderbeck, “Donald Trump and the End Times: How Dispensational Premillennialism Connects Christians with the Big Election Lie,” *Alternate Realities: Conspiracy Theory and the Constitution and Democratic Order* 15, no. 2 (April, 2022): 544-590.

² David Reagan, “Does God Still Speak Through Signs of Nature? Part 3 of 3,” *Christ In Prophecy Journal*, May 11, 2020, <https://christinprophecyblog.org/2020/05/does-god-still-speak-through-signs-of-nature-part-3-of-3/>.

importance of vaccination. However, more typical have been recent works like *The World of the End* (2022) by David Jeremiah and *Future Glory* (2021) by Ed Hindson in which present-day political and scientific issues exist only in the background—if they are mentioned at all. There are few Salem Kirbans to be found among the premillennialists in the 2020s. There are no Billy Grahams.

Premillennialism is also less popular—with denominations like the Evangelical Free Church of America removing it as an essential of the statement of faith in recent years.³ Apocalyptic fervor has waxed and waned across the millennia and U.S. evangelicalism in the early 2020s certainly appears to be in a waning period. This may be due to a lack of overarching global developments suited to sparking prophetic interest. It may be due to the memories of so many failed predictions (by both prophecy writers and secular environmentalist) in the minds of older evangelicals. Or it might be due to the historically countercultural eschatology continuing to prove unwieldy and frustrating for millions of conservative evangelicals who are increasingly seeing their mission on Earth as a political one. In any case, scholars like Daniel Hummel have recently declared that while premillennialism and especially dispensationalism had been enormously popular at the grassroots level into the early 2000s, at the level of serious theological study it had already “flatlined” among seminaries and evangelicals leaders and has never recovered.⁴

³ Daniel Silliman, “EFCA Now Considers Premillennialism a Non-Essential,” *Christianity Today* (August 23, 2019), <https://www.christianitytoday.com/news/2019/august/efca-drops-premillennialism-evangelical-free-church-teds.html>.

⁴ Daniel G. Hummel, *The Rise and Fall of Dispensationalism: How the Evangelical Battle over the End Times Shaped a Nation* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 2023).

Perhaps just as surprisingly, the recent COVID-19 pandemic managed, somewhat, to soften the anti-environmental edges of the staff at *World* magazine. Marvin Olsaky, while watching his hummingbird feeder, mused that while humans likely could not save every corner of Creation, there were still “creatures we can protect, a few at a time.” He hoped that more evangelicals would consider “doing something good” for Creation in their neighborhoods and backyards. Other writers also faced the realization that “as a new virus ravages the entire globe, we see afresh that rootedness in the earth affects everything” and that “having a concern for all God’s creation is not just an environmentalist matter.” In a small way, the pandemic drove home the message of creaturely interconnectedness that readers had been writing in with years. Those readers who had lamented the magazine’s anti-environment bias likely read with a smile the prayer of that writer who now wrote: “We pray and work to see the disharmony between us and the earth overcome.”⁵

With these developments in mind, understanding the eschatological nuances of conservatives evangelicals remains key in understanding how they approach the Creation and its care. Failure (or unwillingness) to do so, will only leave observers caught off guard when future changes inevitably occur, such as with topics like geoengineering. While the wholesale remodeling of the Earth and its climate in response to climate change might appear as the last thing environmentally-skeptical evangelicals would lobby

⁵ Marvin Olsaky, “Save The Hummingbirds,” *World* 35, no. 10 (May 23, 2020), 72; Kelly M. Kapic, “Our Dependency Upon Creation,” *World* (April 13, 2020), <https://wng.org/articles/our-dependency-upon-creation-1618198380>.

for, there are signs that such plans could be on the table if they were to become fully convinced of the seriousness of the crisis. In 2019 Kathy Tyers won the prestigious Christy Award (given to the top evangelical authors each year) in the “Visionary” category for *Shivering World*—a Christian novel set on a planet being terraformed and geoengineered. Postmillennial Reconstructionists (along with post-Reconstructionists and the millions of evangelicals they have influenced), with their high view of human dominion, have expressed support for planet-scale geoengineering projects. Beisner, while thus far dismissive of global warming, has gone on record as saying that *if* the atmosphere ever needed alteration, that he would support funding for research into such techniques. He especially appreciated that “most of the ideas do not entail enormous upfront costs that have year after year repercussions.”⁶ Such a massive endeavor—akin to building a tower up to heaven—would have appeared to earlier premillennialists as the grand design of an Antichrist figure, but from David Meldrum’s *Builders of Continents* in the 1950s to Beisner’s musings in recent years, the task of geoengineering has aligned well (in theory) with the postmillennial outlook. For those who see the United States as chosen among the nations, they might in the future come to also believe that America must cool the world before it can redeem it.

It remains to be seen whether outside observers will be willing to do the necessary work of familiarizing themselves with evangelical theologies. As the widely-loved Christian ecologist Wendell Berry observed:

⁶ Mark Bergin, “Weather Vain?” *World* 24, no. 8 (April 25, 2009), 36.

The anti-Christian conservationists characteristically deal with the Bible by waving it off, and this dismissal conceals, as such dismissals are apt to do, an ignorance that invalidates it. But the anti-Christian environmentalists have not mastered the first rule of the criticism of books: you have to read them before you criticize them.⁷

Not only secular environmentalists, but journalists have also, as David Swartz notes, "created a caricature of evangelicalism as a monolithic political bloc energized by only a few conservative political issues." Even more disappointingly, historians have made their own mistake by "implicitly suggesting an irrevocable dichotomy between social gospel mainliners and rightist fundamentalists" which have only served to further "obscure connections between progressive politics and evangelicalism."⁸ Swartz referred here to the overlooked existence of a leftwing evangelicalism, but in the case of environmentalism it has been the scientifically-driven concern for the Creation within the conservative wing that has been all but invisible to even many evangelicals themselves.

Complicating such understanding has been a similar impulse to think of Reconstructionists in absolutist terms—either as an irrelevant and imploded fringe movement or as the shadowy braintrust pulling the strings of conservative politics. The rightwing watchdog Frederick Clarkson rightly observed that Reconstructionism has been a “self-consciously decentralized and publicity-shy movement.” As a result, many

⁷ Wendell Berry, “Christianity and The Survival of Creation,” *Cross Currents*, 43, no. 2 (Summer, 1993), 149.

⁸ David R. Swartz, *Moral Minority: The Evangelical Left in an Age of Conservatism*. Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012), 7

evangelicals remain “unaware that they hold Reconstructionist ideas...[and] many who are consciously influenced by it avoid the label.”⁹ Historian Molly Worthen cut to the heart of the movement’s simultaneously exaggerated power and under-recognized influence, writing: “The real trouble with Rushdoony’s influence today is not the specter of Mosaic law. The theonomic conspiracy afoot is greatly exaggerated. The tragedy, rather, is that too many Christians have picked up Rushdoony’s language without reading his books...”¹⁰ Few were the contemporary observers perceptive enough to pick up on the political sea-change Reconstructionists fomented within evangelicalism and even fewer were those able to recognize the eschatological means by which they did so. Frederick Edwards and Stephen McCabe were among that minority when they warned their fellow humanists:

...it is precisely this change in thinking, from premillennialism to postmillennialism, under the influence of Christian Reconstructionism, that has made possible the religious right and the political mobilization of millions of otherwise fatalistic fundamentalists.¹¹

⁹ Frederick Clarkson, “Christian Reconstructionism: Theocratic Dominionism Gains Influence,” in Chip Berlet, ed., *Eyes Right! Challenging the Right Wing Backlash* (Boston, MA: South End Press, 1995), 59, 65. Even Gary North, the closest thing to an official historian the movement ever had, declared that “No historian will ever be able to go back and identify in terms of the primary source documents [the history of the Christian Reconstruction movement] because we can't possibly do it.” Gary North quoted in Frederick Clarkson, “Christian Reconstruction: Theocratic Dominionism Gains Influence,” in *Eyes Right! Challenging the Right Wing Backlash*, ed. Chip Berlet (Boston: South End Press, 1995), 66.

¹⁰ Molly Worthen, “The Chalcedon Problem: Rousas John Rushdoony and the Origins of Christian Reconstructionism,” *Church History* 77, no. 2 (June, 2008), 436.

¹¹ Frederick Edwards and Stephen McCabe, “Getting Out God’s Vote: Pat Robertson and the Evangelicals,” *The Humanist* (May-June, 1987), 10.

Edwards and McCabe were wrong in labeling premillennialists “fatalistic fundamentalists,” but they were correct in observing the transformation taking place within evangelicalism.

Importantly, while postmillennial Reconstructionists labored tirelessly to sway evangelicalism broadly away from environmentalism, secular environmentalists also bear substantial responsibility. Where secular scientific and environmental organization have been willing to reach out to evangelicals, these efforts have typically been rewarded with cooperation. In the 1970s, environmentalists like Paul Ehrlich had found receptive partners among premillennialists. Again in the 1990s, evangelicals (even conservative ones) rallied to Carl Sagan’s call for religion to assist science in addressing the environmental crisis. Such a relationship between evangelicals and environmentalists could have conceivably persisted had environmental groups like the Sierra Club and Audubon Society prioritized long-term religious support over short-term political opposition to the Reagan administration. The strategic decision in the early 1980s to cast premillennialists as environmental boogeymen proved effective for rallying political and financial support, but created the conditions for Reconstructionist influence to spread. The story of evangelicals abandoning environmentalism is, to perhaps an uncomfortable degree, also the story of environmentalism turning its back on evangelicalism.

A key, but regularly overlooked, point made by Lindsey illuminates one reason why some evangelicals in recent years have been skeptical of the models and projections of climate scientists. Both his book and documentary open with a severe reminder that in

ancient Israel, failure by a prophet was not tolerated. Only those with unblemished records received an audience as “anything less would doom the prophet to death by stoning.” He criticized those prophecy writers who attempted to use the events of WWI and then WWII to calculate the date of Christ’s return, saying that “their failure discredited prophecy.”¹² For secular environmentalists today, the dramatic predictions made by their predecessors in the 1970s are more likely to produce chuckles and mild embarrassment than soul-searching. But for evangelicals, prophetic failure is unacceptable. (There is a fine line between the orthodox anticipation of “Jesus is coming *soon*, perhaps even today” and the unorthodoxy of setting specific dates.) The available scientific data of the 1970s led many respectable environmentalists to warn of global famines by the 1980s and the collapse of civilization by the end of the century and premillennialists of that time were quick to pass along such predictions. However, when the appointed times came and went and civilization only continued to grow, many premillennialists began to take up stones against the green prophets. The same predictions of environmental disaster that Jack Chick had included in his 1970s tract *No Escape* as proof of Christ near return reappeared four decades later in his anti-environmental tract *Global Warming* as proof that environmentalists should not be trusted.

Along with political maneuvering, fundamental misunderstandings of the nature and function of prophecy led many secular environmentalists to mistakenly view premillennialists as the enemies of the Earth. How could one care for a planet that would

¹² Hal Lindsey, *The Late Great Planet Earth* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1970), 20, 43.

inevitably be ravaged by God? At best, assumed these environmentalists, such believers would passively await The End while conditions worsened. At worst, they might be active in their fatalism and seek to bring about the apocalypse themselves. However, for premillennialists, prophecy and inevitability were far more open-ended than most realized. As the fundamentalist Noel Smith wrote in the 1950s: “Foreknowledge does not determine acts. Bible prophecy is not baptized fatalism.”¹³ Forty years later, Billy Graham still concurred with that conviction, telling evangelicals that there was no biblical justification to “stand glibly by and applaud the impending Apocalypse—in fact, it would be wrong. It is up to us to pray and work.”¹⁴

Whereas many outsiders have interpreted the evangelical exhortation to “work until Jesus returns” as a call to do that work which will accelerate the return of Christ, premillennial prophecy writers actually believed that such work was more likely to have the opposite effect. Faithful living and the preaching of the Gospel, if God was so willing, could actually *push back the prophetic clock*. From Graham’s earliest sermons, he regularly followed declarations of “the Second Coming of the Lord is near” with a simple formula for delaying the actual event: “...if America goes to her knees in earnest the whole situation including the threat of war can be changed and young people again look forward to planned and orderly living.”¹⁵ Lindsey agreed, writing that evangelicals

¹³ Noel Smith, “The Book of Exodus: An Introductory Lecture,” *Baptist Bible Tribune* 3, no. 12 (October 10, 1952), 4.

¹⁴ Billy Graham, *Storm Warning* (Dallas, TX: Word Publishing, 1992), 210.

¹⁵ B. D. Stevens, “Saturday Night Bible Readers: America’s Darkest Hour,” *Baptist Bible Tribune* 1, no. 34 (March 2, 1951), 8.

should “do everything that is tenable to try to make things better in the United States and, as we have opportunity, in the world...I personally believe that no matter how rapidly this pattern comes together, it can be delayed...We are on a countdown which could be slowed down in the event of a great spiritual awakening.”¹⁶ For those who struggled to understand how God’s prophesied events could be both conditional and unconditional, inevitable and also (at least temporarily) avoidable, Graham explained:

At some time in the future—a time unknown to us—the terrible hooves of the four horsemen will finally trample across the stage of human history...Until this time that God has appointed, however, there are many occasions when God seemingly delays or averts His hand of judgment for a period of time because men have repented and turned to Him in faith and obedience....Why? I believe it is because there are times when God delays His judgments, possibly even for several generations, because many have listened to His message of warning and turned to Him in repentance and faith...[Therefore] we must not feel that we are to sit back and do nothing to fight evil...¹⁷

Dave Hunt was acutely aware of the popular perception of evangelicals who took The End seriously and wrote that such people “mistakenly assume that anyone who takes Armageddon seriously must therefore be a fatalist resigned to coming worldwide destruction, and even happy to see signs that it is near at hand. This is not necessarily so.

¹⁶ Stephen Board and Hal Lindsey, “The Great Cosmic Countdown: Hal Lindsey on the Future,” *Eternity* 28, no. 1 (January, 1977), 80.

¹⁷ Billy Graham, *Approaching Hoofbeats: The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse* (Waco, TX: Word Books, 1983), 74-75.

If the world would take these warnings seriously and repent, God might withhold His judgment.”¹⁸

Evangelicals even recognized the links between ecological faithfulness, the effectiveness of their witness, and the ultimate fate of the Earth. D. Wayne Linn, a premillennial biology professor at Southern Oregon College, warned fellow believers against the temptation to allow their eschatology to encourage environmental passivity and fatalism. He reasoned that if evangelicals wanted their Gospel message to be effective, “we had better get into the environmental fight or else we’ll justifiably earn a stigma.” For Linn, the solutions were mutually reinforcing: Evangelicals must engage with environmentalism in order to be effective witnesses while the root cause of the environmental crisis was their failure to properly evangelize the world. Although the end of the world was ultimately inevitable, he maintained hope that “a cataclysmic early end can avoid, or...delayed, if we act aggressively and positively as evangelical Christians.”¹⁹

Pushing back the prophetic clock has not depended entirely upon the United States either. In contrast to Reconstructionists who demanded a Christian America in order to evangelize the world, premillennialists saw no such need for the United States in God’s plan. As David Wilkerson wrote in 1985: “God does not need America to evangelize the world. We have failed in this mission.” He instead pointed to South America and Africa as the homes of true disciples willing to make real sacrifices to share

¹⁸ Dave Hunt and T. A. McMahon, *The Seduction of Christianity: Spiritual Discernment in the Last Days* (Eugene, OR: Harvest House, 1985), 216.

¹⁹ D. Wayne Linn, “Christian—It’s Your Environment Too,” *Journal of the American Scientific Affiliation* 25, no. 1 (March, 1973), 13-16.

the Gospel.²⁰ Thus it is to the Global South that one must look to see the future of evangelical environmentalism. A glimpse of that future can be seen in the once-a-generation Lausanne Conferences. The ecological sensitivity displayed in the inaugural 1974 conference has only grown with subsequent gatherings. At the Lausanne II International Congress on World Evangelization held in Manila, Philippines, in July of 1989, speakers rebuked those “sub-biblical” Christians who appeared to an unbelieving world as “pirates or looters scavenging the ruins of the earth for personal gain” and lamented how humans were driving their fellow creatures to extinction day by day.²¹ It culminated with a dramatic statement of contrition for not doing more to address the crisis:

This generation leaves a legacy that gives little hope for mercy from the children whose assets we have borrowed. Silent springs, dying forests, dead lakes, polluted rivers, depleted ozone shields, hazardous waste, life-threatening air quality, soil erosion, acid rain, and the 'greenhouse effect' are just some of the words we taught our children. The environment and the structural debt may be the church's greatest problem because we have not yet started a real discussion of whether this relates to us at all. The biblical mandate of stewardship for God's creation is not touched in the Manila Manifesto. After the young generation has flocked to Greenpeace, WWF, and other environmental and New Age organizations, it will be hard to win

²⁰ David Wilkerson, *Set The Trumpet To Thy Mouth: Hosea 8:1* (Lindale, TX: World Challenge, Inc., 1985), 26-27.

²¹ Pete Hammond, “The Mandate of the Laity I” in J. D. Douglas, ed., *Proclaim Christ Until He Comes: Calling the Whole Church to Take the Whole Gospel to the Whole World* (Minneapolis, MN: World Wide Publications, 1990), 83; Luis Bush, “The Challenge Before Us,” in J. D. Douglas, ed., *Proclaim Christ Until He Comes: Calling the Whole Church to Take the Whole Gospel to the Whole World* (Minneapolis, MN: World Wide Publications, 1990), 59.

them back to a church that has not been concerned with what they consider serious problems.²²

When the conference met again in Cape Town in 2010, its commitment to caring for the Creation had only strengthened. With multiple speakers devoted to discussing the effects of climate change on the poorest and most vulnerable (including John Houghton), the third Lausanne Conference’s four thousand attending evangelical leaders committed themselves to “urgent and prophetic ecological responsibility.”²³ Members of the Lausanne Global Consultation on Creation Care and the Gospel would meet in St. Ann, Jamaica, in 2012 to further develop the environmental components of the *Cape Town Commitment*. The consultation group affirmed that evangelicals’ concern for the Creation was without question a “gospel issue within the lordship of Christ”—one which would require “leadership from the Global South” as well as “prophetic advocacy and healing reconciliation.”²⁴ As a result of the Jamaica conference, the Lausanne Movement quickly partnered with the World Evangelical Alliance to form the Creation Care Network and hired the organization’s first full-time “senior associate for creation care.” From March, 2014, to November, 2015, the Lausanne/WEA Creation Care Network hosted a series of five conferences held in the Philippines, Kenya, the United States, Peru, and Ghana. As

²² Frank Kaleb Jansen, “World Overview Workshop,” in J. D. Douglas, ed., *Proclaim Christ Until He Comes: Calling the Whole Church to Take the Whole Gospel to the Whole World* (Minneapolis, MN: World Wide Publications, 1990), 458.

²³ The Third Lausanne Congress, *The Cape Town Commitment: A Confession of Faith and a Call to Action*, 2010.

²⁴ Lausanne Global Consultation on Creation Care and the Gospel, *Creation Care and the Gospel: Jamaica Call to Action*, 2012.

of 2023, the Lausanne/WEA Creation Care Network remains one of the most effective organizations for bringing evangelicals from the West and the Global South together (with membership drawn from 130 countries) in order to “work together to heal God’s creation.”²⁵

The continuing ecological effects of premillennial-motivated missions will likely be positive ones. While premillennialists do not believe the entire world will be converted as postmillennialists do, they do believe that revival—even global revival—is possible if God’s people are sufficiently active and God’s will is sufficiently merciful. Such revival, as with ancient Nineveh, is capable of staving off disaster and granting more time. However, the concern is just how rapidly Pentecostal and charismatic versions of Christianity are spreading through the Global South and how susceptible this branch is to Dominion Theology and its Reconstructionist impulses. With financiers like the Ahmanson’s Fieldstead Company investing heavily in the Pentecostal movement spreading throughout the Global South, it remains to be seen which will have the greater influence: the postmillennial, post-reconstructionist vision of economic cornucopianism or the premillennialism evangelistic vision of ecological sensitivity.

Despite its unjustified anti-environmental reputation, eschatology has provided several benefits for believers engaging with the environmental crisis. As the historian Robert Booth Fowler found, Christians in general possessed an advantage in that they maintained “a hope in history and the future because of God, that is quite missing from

²⁵ “Creation Care,” *Lausanne Movement*, <https://lausanne.org/networks/issues/creation-care>.

secular environmentalism.” In the face of dire scientific projections, he noted that “Protestant ecological language can wax apocalyptic, but it rarely gives way to depression or even serious despair.”²⁶ Premillennialism also provided environmentally sensitive conservative evangelicals with a radical means of resolving the imminent-transcendent dilemma. While God remained utterly transcendent over His Creation, the ever-approaching apocalypse perpetually collapsed the temporal distance between such transcendence and the final breaking through of divine power uniting with and renewing the natural world. The temporal porosity in which believers lived allowed them to worship a God far beyond pantheism while still assigning divine value and purpose to both nature and technology as they increasingly fulfilled their prophetic utilities. Premillennialists recognized this and it drove their intense opposition to those who would set dates. As David Allen Lewis explained:

Setting a date destroys the concept of potential imminence, which implies that Jesus could come today. One who understands the concept of imminence will not be taken by surprise when the Lord returns...Make plans for the future. Be ready to go today. Be prepared to stay around for the rest of a natural lifetime. Living responsibly on the edge of time and eternity.²⁷

Whereas traditional Christian theology emphasizes God’s transcendence, avenues for immanence have also been commonly accepted. For Protestants the divine comes near

²⁶ Robert Booth Fowler, *The Greening of Protestant Thought* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1995), 4, 20.

²⁷ David Allen Lewis, *Prophecy 2000*, expanded edition (Green Forest, AR: New Leaf Press, 1992), 16-17.

the individual through salvation and an ensuing personal relationship while the Catholic sacraments bring the sacred into contact with the human. Christian ecotheologians have worked to apply these avenues to nature itself through concepts like the “Cosmic Christ” and the “sacramental view of nature.” For premillennial evangelicals, it is their active anticipation of the approaching End that brings God immanently near to both the human and nature via time rather than space or spirit. For these millenarians, the Kingdom of God will be an utterly immanent theocracy in which lions, lambs, rivers, and trees will all radiate with God’s glory. The apocalypse is thus their great source of hope as it signals the long-awaited collapsing of the immanent/transcendent divide.

Theological explorations of the ecological potential of premillennialism have been few and far between since the 1990s when Lewis wrote of living responsibly on the edge of time and eternity. One of the most notable exception came in 2008 when David Neff, writing as the editor at *Christianity Today*, considered the potential of premillennialism for developing a kind of “Second Coming Ecology.” For Neff, such an eschatological view of the Earth enabled evangelicals to extend Christ’s salvational work to the redemption of the Creation, to prioritize God’s purpose for the Creation over short-term material benefits, to avoid pantheism, and to truly see the humanity from God’s perspective as an interconnected global community. Yet perhaps most fundamentally, Neff wrote that living with The End in mind encourages believers to understand that all things—time, nature, and civilization—are bounded and have their limits. Unlimited

growth in this world is just as unrealistic as immortality in this life. “It is now up to us to live with a theology of limits,” he challenged readers.²⁸

Another potential End Times eco-theology—one which has yet to be explored by evangelical theologians—extends the concept of dispensations to the Human-Creation relationship. As trinitarians, dispensational premillennialists have easily conceptualized a triangular set of reciprocal relationships between God, humanity, and the Creation. For these believers, the changing nature of the God-Human relationship forms the basis of their theology far beyond eschatology. Similarly, though less remarked upon, is their understanding of how the God-Creation relationship has changed and will change dramatically in the End Times. Missing from this framework of shifting dynamics is an exploration of how the Human-Creation relationship has been altered by the processes of science and industrialization. Whereas those early fallen humans faced a tremendous task in “subduing” a natural world that was mysterious and dangerous, with forces that dwarfed human efforts, today the planet’s surface lays bare beneath the unblinking gaze of satellites and its very rocks are being shaped more so by human forces than geological ones. While pandemics and volcanic eruptions prove that the Earth will never be fully subdued, clearly humans now occupy a dominant position over the dark forests and endless waves that cowed our ancestors. In a very real sense, we have entered a new ecological dispensation in the Human-Creation relationship and with that must recognize the new obligations this demands of us. In much the same way that the nature of the

²⁸ David Neff, “Second Coming Ecology,” *Christianity Today* 52, no. 7 (July 18, 2008), 36.

parent-child relationship changes, the natural world which for so long demanded obedience to its awesome power now sits enfeebled and vulnerable before its grown child. Grace must replace a single-minded focus on growth. Domination must give way to mercy. Secular environmentalists have referred to this new dispensation as the “Anthropocene,” but the periodization of history has always been a chiefly Christian endeavor. A dispensational eco-theology remains a rich, though unexplored, avenue for crafting a uniquely evangelical response to environmental concerns both global and local and one which might help evangelicals better fulfill those obligations of their God-Human relationship.

However, at its most practical level (and for those purposes which will likely most interest secular political observers) premillennialism and especially dispensationalism have remained the most fundamental theological foe of Reconstructionism and the anti-environmentalism that grows from its postmillennial theonomy. Reconstructionists have never hidden this fact, with leaders like Greg Bahnsen and Kenneth Gentry openly stating, “the most natural opponent of the Reconstructionist position is dispensationalism.”²⁹ Premillennialists, as they entered their debates with Reconstructionists in the late 1980s, well understood what the consequences for evangelicalism would be if they failed. As Thomas Ice once begged evangelicals falling under the sway of Dominion Theology to understand, “the practical differences are as

²⁹ Greg L. Bahnsen and Kenneth L. Gentry, *House Divided: The Break-Up of Dispensational Theology* (Tyler, TX: Institute for Christian Economics, 1989), 5.

great as night and day—past and future.”³⁰ The faith of millions of Americans, which once encouraged piety and accommodated pluralism, now increasingly promises dominion and demands occupation.

Once evangelicalism overcame its defensive posture initiated by Lynn White’s accusations, it became quite fertile soil for a growing and uniquely evangelical style of environmentalism. Several scholars have attempted in recent years to explain why this movement failed to bloom. Yet what has been missing from these accounts is a necessarily broad view of history and a willingness to see conservative, premillennial evangelicals as something more than otherworldly fatalists. In reality, forms of ecological sensitivity emerged all across the political/theological spectrum of evangelicalism. It was never confined to any particular “moral minority.” Perhaps most surprising of all, it found its broadest expression within the very segment of evangelicalism believed to be most fundamentally opposed to ecological sensitivity: premillennialism and its popularizers. To a greater extent than most seminary-trained theologians, these prophets of pulp relied in equal measures upon the Biblical text, the latest findings of science, and the this-worldly headlines of their newspapers. All these they incorporated seamlessly into a prophetic framework that proved as durable as it was flexible.

Premillennialism, despite its remote and bizarre appearance to outsiders, proved remarkably congenial to democratic pluralism and multiculturalism. According to the internal logic of the belief system, the increasing secularity and diversity of American

³⁰ Thomas Ice, “Back to the Future: Present, Practical Lessons Learned From Biblical Prophecy,” *Pre-Trib Research Center* (November-December, 1989).

society was not (in the figurative sense) “the end of the world” precisely because it might well be (in the literal sense) *a sign of the end of the world*. The attractiveness of a theology like premillennialism has been that it functions as a perpetual source of hope regardless of world conditions. Christians celebrate revival as a merciful reprieve from a God who is willing to give humanity more chances to repent than it deserves, while darkening days only cause the flame of hope to burn brighter in anticipation of the ultimate fulfillment of every divine promise. One of the greatest oversights in the study of religious history has been the depressingly consistent unwillingness by scholars to apply such internal logic to the motives of apocalyptic believers. Labeling such believers “otherworldly fatalists” is certainly politically convenient, but intellectually dishonest. Evangelicals may believe the Antichrist’s reign is inevitable, but they have never campaigned for him nor would they ever vote for him. Similarly, the eventual destruction and renewal of the planet by God Himself has rarely served to justify pollution and ecological exploitation. More often it has been seen as an evil to be resisted as mightily as one would resist the Antichrist, the Beast, and all the other satanic hosts of the apocalypse.

Lynn White struggled to find a potential patron saint of ecology within the history of Christianity. Given the millions of readers which premillennialist prophecy writers have shared the message of environmental danger with, we might find a veritable pantheon of potential ecological saints among such paperback preachers. Additionally, given the sheer diversity of voices and approaches needed to address a truly apocalyptic

threat like climate change, sainthood should not be reserved for the perfectly scientific figures. As such, I would recommend prophecy writers like Billy Graham, Hal Lindsey, Salem Kirban, and Dave Hunt as unconventional candidates for ecological sainthood. Across the late twentieth century, one would be hard pressed to find writers who did more to share the apocalyptic message from the environmental sciences to millions of sincere Americans.

The story of conservative evangelical environmentalism is one of apocalyptic hope and activist disappointment. What began as a growing concern over the environmental effects of nuclear testing, blossomed into a genuine movement in the 1970s and remained so vibrant among premillennialists that even by the 1990s historian Paul Boyer was predicting that it would be the sustaining theme of premillennialism well into the next millennium. That such ecological concern has transformed into outright antagonism among much of conservative evangelicalism today represents a sharp deviation from the movement's historical trajectory. From the earliest days of modern science, premillennialists had paired an eagerness to probe the depths of Creation's mysteries via scientific observation with a deep reverence for the "exquisitely beautiful orb" on which they lived. Their apocalyptic orientation, far from lulling them into otherworldly passivity, stimulated their inquisitive senses in a very much *this-worldly* quest to discern the "signs of the times" and spurred them to greater evangelistic efforts in hopes that a returning Christ would find them hard at work. Amidst an increasingly technocratic world in which scientific authorities have often struggled to glean hope from

mountains of doomsday data, premillennialists' prophetic hope has for decades sustained their spirits as they have faced overwhelming challenges without succumbing to despair. In 1971, just one year removed from the first Earth Day, the evangelical leader Carl F. H. Henry stood on a stage in the heart of Jerusalem before an international assembly of premillennial leaders. In his sermon that day, Henry preached neither passivity nor fatalism. Instead, he outlined the hope-filled and activist approach which such believers brought to the early ecological crisis and which—one hopes—they may return to in the future:

In a day when men wonder if pollution will revert the earth to its primeval desolation, if population expansion threatens global survival, or if atomic warfare will erase the last remnants of civilization, we continue to believe that human destiny is supremely in God's hands, and that He will determine the final chapter of earthly history. But by no means do we therefore ignore the pressing problems of our day; if this is God's world, as we believe it is, we dare not forsake it to the despoilers, but recall our generation we must to the righteous and just purposes for which God has made man and the cosmos.³¹

³¹ Carl F. H. Henry, "Preface," in Carl F. H. Henry, ed., *Prophecy In The Making: Messages Prepared For Jerusalem Conference On Biblical Prophecy* (Carol Stream, IL: Creation House, 1971), 9-10.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- “1,200 At Bible Session: ‘Sermons From Science’ Given at Conference Here.” *New York Times* (May 10, 1938): 16.
- “2007 SBC Resolution: ‘On Global Warming’.” *Baptist Press* (March 10, 2008). Available from <https://www.baptistpress.com/resource-library/news/2007-sbc-resolution-on-global-warming/> [Accessed September 29, 2023].
- “25 Most Influential Evangelicals in America.” *Time* (February 7, 2005).
- “5-Room Underground Cottage, Safe From A-Bombs, for \$5550.” *Baptist Bible Tribune* 1, no. 11 (September 1, 1950): 8.
- “A Chilling Warning From Lake Erie.” *Baptist Bible Tribune* 18, no. 14 (October 6, 1967): 6.
- “A Country At The Crossroads.” *Christianity Today* 13, no. 11 (October 11, 1968): 26-27.
- “A Manifesto.” In *Hastening The Day of God: Prophetic Messages from the International Congress on Prophecy*, edited by John W. Bradbury, 11-12. Wheaton, IL: Van Kampen Press, 1953.
- Abate, Zachary. “Coal Concerns.” *World* (May 27, 2011). Available at <https://wng.org/sift/coal-concerns-1617430800> [Accessed September 29, 2023].
- Ackerman, William A. “A Tavern In The Sky.” *Church of God Evangel* 46, no. 33 (October 15, 1955): 3, 11.
- Adams, Billy. “Flying Saucers and Men from Mars.” *Foursquare Magazine* 22, no. 6 (June, 1950): 6-7, 9.
- Ahmanson, Howard, Jr. “What Christian Reconstructionism Gave Me.” *Howard Ahmanson Jr.* (August 14, 2018). Available at <https://howardahmansonjr.com/2018/08/what-christian-reconstruction-gave-me/> [Accessed September 29, 2023].
- Aikman, David. “Washington Scorecard.” *Christianity Today* 32, no. 15 (October 21, 1988): 22-23.
- Ajemian, Robert. “Zealous Lord of a Vast Domain.” *Time* 117, no. 13 (March 30, 1981):

27.

Akenson, Donald Harman. *The Americanization of the Apocalypse: Creating America's Own Bible*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2023.

Allen, Ronald Barclay. "Attacking God's Glory." *Christianity Today* 18, no. 23 (August 30, 1974): 19.

Alvarado, Ruben C. "Environmentalism and Christianity's Ethic of Dominion." *Journal of Christian Reconstruction* 11, no. 2 (1986-87): 201-215.

"America's Changing Religious Landscape." Pew Research Center (May 12, 2015). Available from <https://www.pewresearch.org/religion/2015/05/12/americas-changing-religious-landscape/> [Accessed September 29].

"American Council Endorses Tests." *Baptist Bible Tribune* 8, no. 42 (May 6, 1958): 7.

"An Examination of the Views of Religious Organizations Regarding Global Warming." *United States Senate* (June 7, 2007). Available at <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/CHRG-110shrg61968/pdf/CHRG-110shrg61968.pdf> [Accessed September 29, 2023]

"An Open Letter to the Signers of "Climate Change: An Evangelical Call To Action" and Others Concerned About Global Warming." *Cornwall Alliance* (July 25, 2006). Available from <https://cornwallalliance.org/landmark-documents/an-open-letter-to-the-signers-of-climate-change-an-evangelical-call-to-action-and-others-concerned-about-global-warming/> [Accessed September 29, 2023].

Anderson, Leith. "Scientists & Thinkers: Eric Chivian & Richard Cizik." *Time* (May 12, 2008).

Anderson, V. Elving. "Biological Engineering and the Future of Man." In *Horizons of Science: Christian Scholars Speak Out*, edited by Carl F. Henry, 156-174. San Francisco, CA: Harper & Row, 1978.

———. "Environmental Pollution." In *Baker's Dictionary of Christian Ethics*, edited by Carl F. Henry, 209-212. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House Company, 1973.

———. "Eutychus and His Kin." *Christianity Today* 9, no. 5 (December 4, 1964): 20-23.

Arnold, Ron. *At the Eye of the Storm: James Watt and the Environmentalists*. Chicago,

- IL: Regnery Gateway, 1982.
- “Around The World: Seattle, Washington.” *The Bridegroom Messenger* 51, no. 3 (December, 1962): 6.
- “At the Root of Earth’s Sickness is Man.” *Eternity* 21, no.5 (May, 1970): 10.
- “Atomic Energy.” *Pentecostal Evangel* (February 16, 1946): 5.
- Augsburger, Myron S. “Christian Higher Education and World Evangelization.” In *Let The Earth Hear His Voice: International Congress on World Evangelization, Lausanne, Switzerland*, edited by J. D. Douglas, 664-672. Minneapolis, MN: World Wide Publications, 1975.
- Badke, William B. *Project Earth: Preserving the World God Created*. Portland, OR: Multnomah Press, 1991.
- Bahnsen, Greg. “On Worshipping the Creature Rather Than the Creator.” *Journal of Christian Reconstruction* 1, no. 1 (Summer, 1974): 81-127.
- . “The *Prima Facie* Acceptability of Postmillennialism.” *Journal of Christian Reconstruction* 5, no. 1 (Summer, 1978): 65-135.
- . *Theonomy in Christian Ethics*. Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company, 1977.
- Bahnsen, Greg L. and Kenneth L. Gentry. *House Divided: The Break-Up of Dispensational Theology*. Tyler, TX: Institute for Christian Economics, 1989.
- Baker, Dwight. “How I Learned to Love Media Conglomerates.” *Christian Retailing* (September 3, 2014). Available at <https://www.christianretailing.com/index.php/news/125-features/industry-issues/news> [Accessed September 29, 2023].
- Baldwin, Samuel Davies. *Armageddon: Or, The Overthrow of Romanism and Monarchy; The Existence of the United States Foretold in the Bible*. Cincinnati, OH: Applegate & Company, 1854.
- Baldwin, Stanley C. “Some Answers to Pollution.” *Christianity Today* 61, no. 6 (June, 1970): 26-27.
- Ball, Jim. “A Response to Dr. Jay Richards.” Institute on Religion and Democracy. “God Is Great. Is God Green? A Conference on Evangelicals and the Environmental

- Task." Washington D.C., November 14, 2007.
- Balmer, Randall. *Redeemer: The Life of Jimmy Carter*. New York, NY: Basic Books, 2014.
- Bandow, Doug. *Beyond Good Intentions: A Biblical View of Politics*. Westchester, IL: Crossway Books, 1988.
- . "Looking Up: More Proofs That Things Are Not Always As Bad As They Seem." *World* 11, no. 40 (March 15, 1997): 24.
- . "Risk, Rhetoric, Facts: Books On Why The Environment Is Better Than We Think." *World* 11, no. 32 (January 18, 1997): 24.
- Barela, John. "Government: Of, By, and for Whom?" In *Earth's Final Days: Essays in Apocalypse III*, edited by William T. James, 123-148. Green Forest, AR: New Leaf Press, 1994.
- . "The Mystics: Prophets or Psychics?" In *The Triumphant Return of Christ: Essays in Apocalypse II*, edited by William T. James, 89-120. Green Forest, AR: New Leaf Press, 1993.
- Barker, David C. and David H. Bearce. "End-Times Theology, the Shadow of the Future, and Public Resistance to Addressing Global Climate Change." *Political Research Quarterly* 66, no. 2 (June, 2013): 267-279.
- Barnette, Henlee H. *Crucial Problems in Christian Perspective*. Philadelphia, PA: Westminster Press, 1970.
- . "Stewardship of the Environment." *Light* (October-November, 1980): 5-6, 12.
- . *The Church and the Ecological Crisis*. Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1972.
- Bates, Leon. *Projection For Survival*. Sherman, TX: Bible Believers Evangelistic Association, 1977.
- Beal, R. S., Jr. "Can a Premillennialist Consistently Entertain a Concern for the Environment? A Rejoinder to Al Truesdale." *Perspectives on Science and Christian Faith: Journal of the American Scientific Affiliation* 46 (September,

1994): 173-78.

Bebbington, David W. *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain: A History from the 1730s to the 1980s*. London: Routledge, 1989.

Beisner, E. Calvin. "An Examination of the Scientific, Ethical and Theological Implications of Climate Change Policy." *The Cornwall Alliance* (November 21, 2005). Available from <http://web.archive.org/web/20170516204333/http://cornwallalliance.org/docs/an-examination-of-the-scientific-ethical-and-theological-implications-of-climate-change-policy.pdf> [Accessed September 29, 2023].

———. "An Open Letter to Pope Francis on Climate Change." *Cornwall Alliance* (April 27, 2015). Available at <https://cornwallalliance.org/anopenlettertopopefrancisonclimatechange/> [Accessed September 29, 2023].

———. "Are God's Resources Finite? A Group of Christian Leaders Claim They Are, But Does This Claim Square With The Evidence?" *World* 8, no. 27 (November 27, 1993): 10-13.

———. "Clearing the Smog on Environmental Issues." *World* 5, no. 22 (October 27, 1990): 7.

———. *Evangelical Heathenism: Examining Contemporary Revivalism*. Moscow, ID: Canon Press, 1996.

———. "Fatal Regulation." *World* (October 4, 2011). Available at <https://wng.org/articles/fatal-regulation-1618204296> [Accessed September 29, 2023].

———. "First-Person: Revisiting 'Climate Change Denialism'." *Baptist Press* (April 19, 2011). Available at <https://www.baptistpress.com/resource-library/news/first-person-revisiting-climate-change-denialism/> [Accessed September 29, 2023].

———. *God In Three Persons*. Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 1984.

———. "Gospel Confusion in Christian Environmentalism." *World* (May 29, 2012). Available at <https://wng.org/articles/gospel-confusion-in-christian-environmentalism-1617286253> [Accessed September 29, 2023].

- . “Green Energy Hurts The Poor.” *World* (July 2, 2013). Available at <https://wng.org/articles/green-energy-hurts-the-poor-1617286561> [Accessed September 11, 2023].
- . “Help! The Market’s Working.” *World* 7, no. 18 (September 26, 1992): 11.
- . “*Imago Dei* and the Population Debate.” *Trinity Journal* 18, no. 2 (Fall, 1997): 173-197.
- . “Is Superstorm Sandy a Harbinger of the ‘New Normal’ Because of Global Warming?” *World* (November 6, 2012). Available at <https://wng.org/articles/is-superstorm-sandy-a-harbinger-of-the-new-normal-because-of-global-warming-1617286117> [Accessed September 29, 2023].
- . “It Cuts Both Ways.” *World* 7, no. 34 (February 6, 1993): 16.
- . “Obscuring the Meaning of ‘Pro-Life’.” *World* (December 19, 2011). Available at <https://wng.org/articles/obscuring-the-meaning-of-pro-life-1617287765> [Accessed September 29, 2023].
- . “Poverty and Pollution.” *World* 13, no. 10 (March 14, 1998): 19-20.
- . *Prosperity and Poverty: The Compassionate Use of Resources in a World of Scarcity*. Westchester, IL: Crossway Books, 1988.
- . “Repressive? Unexpected Answers to a Humanist Poll.” *World* 3, no. 33 (February 6, 1989): 13.
- . “Shall We Destroy Abortion Clinics?” *World* (February 29, 1988): 11.
- . “Sixpence None The Richer.” *World* 14, no. 29 (July 31, 1999): 20-25.
- . *Social Justice: How Good Intentions Undermine Justice and the Gospel*. Washington, DC: Cornwall Alliance, Concerned Women for America, and the Family Research Council, 2013.
- . “The Character of the Good Apologist: An Appreciation for the Life and Labors of Bob Passantino.” Norman L. Geisler and Chad V. Mister, eds., *Reasons For Faith: Making A Case For The Christian Faith: Essays In Honor of Bob Passantino and Gretchen Passantino Coburn* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books):

- 77-94.
- . “The Greening of the Cross.” *The Freeman* 45, no. 7 (July, 1995): 429-432.
- . “Warming Up To Earth Day.” *World* 15, no. 16 (April 22, 2000): 29.
- . “What Should We Sacrifice To Defeat Hussein?” *World* 5, no. 28 (December 22, 1990): 7.
- . *Where Garden Meets Wilderness: Evangelical Entry into the Environmental Debate*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1997.
- . “Why Are Older Scientists More Likely to Doubt Climate Alarmism?” *Cornwall Alliance* (July 20, 2017). Available from <https://cornwallalliance.org/2017/07/why-are-older-scientists-more-likely-to-doubt-climate-alarmism/> [Accessed September 29, 2023].
- Beisner, E. Calvin and Ross McKittrick. *A Call to Truth, Prudence, and Protection of the Poor: An Evangelical Response to Global Warming*. Collierville, TN: Cornwall Alliance, 2006.
- Beliles, Mark A. and Stephen K. McDowell. *America’s Providential History*. Charlottesville, VA: Providence Foundation, 1989.
- Belz, Joel. “Mountaintop Experience.” *World* 13, no. 26 (July 4, 1998): 11.
- Bendroth, Margaret Lamberts. *Fundamentalism and Gender, 1875 to the Present*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1993.
- Bergin, Mark. “Greener Than Thou.” *World* 21, no. 16 (April 22, 2006): 18-21.
- . “Love Thy Neighbor, Love The Neighborhood.” *World* 20, no. 30 (August 6, 2005): 22-23.
- . “Out of the Dark.” *World* 21, no. 44 (November 18, 2006): 38-39.
- . “Red Light, Green Light.” *World* 21, no. 8 (February 25, 2006): 29.
- . “Richard Cizik Out.” *World* (December 13, 2008). Available at <https://wng.org/sift/richard-cizik-out-1617252477> [Accessed September 29, 2023].

- . “Weather Vain?” *World* 24, no. 8 (April 25, 2009): 32-36.
- Berry, Wendell. “Christianity and the Survival of Creation.” *Cross Currents*, 43, no. 2 (Summer, 1993): 149-164.
- “Best Books.” *The King’s Business* 1, no. 1 (January, 1910), back cover.
- Biel, Anders and Andreas Nilsson. “Religious Values and Environmental Concern: Harmony and Detachment.” *Social Science Quarterly* 86, no. 1 (March, 2005): 178-191.
- “Bill Moyers hearts us, and we him.” *Grist*. December 4, 2004. Available from <https://grist.org/article/bill-moyers-hearts-us-and-we-him/> [Accessed September 29, 2023].
- Billingsley, K. L. *The Seductive Image: A Christian Critique of the World of Film*. Westchester, IL: Crossway Books, 1989.
- Bird, John. “Our Dying Waters.” *Saturday Evening Post* (April 23, 1966): 29-35, 86-87.
- Blansfield, Albert M. “A World Crisis and the Demands It Makes of the Individual.” *Foursquare Magazine* 33, no. 3 (March, 1960): 8-10, 18.
- Block, Herb. “Onward, Christian Soldier!” *Library of Congress* (June 3, 1981). Available at <https://www.loc.gov/item/2012640695/> [Accessed September 29, 2023].
- Bloomfield, Arthur E. *The Changing Climate: The Bible Story of Water*. Minneapolis, MN: Bethany House Publishers, 1956.
- Board, Stephen and Hal Lindsey. “The Great Cosmic Countdown: Hal Lindsey on the Future.” *Eternity* 28, no. 1 (January, 1977): 19-21, 80.
- Bookchin, Murray. *Our Synthetic Environment*. New York, NY: Harper Colophon Books, 1962.
- . *The Ecology of Freedom: The Emergence and Dissolution of Hierarchy*. Revised edition. New York, NY: Black Rose Books, 1991.
- Borg, Julie. “Losing Sleep Over Global Warming.” *World* (August 15, 2019). Available from <https://wng.org/roundups/losing-sleep-over-global-warming-1617225222> [Accessed September 29, 2023].

- . “NOAA Scientists Claim to Plug Hole in Global Warming Theory.” *World* (June 19, 2015). Available at <https://wng.org/sift/noaa-scientists-claim-to-plug-hole-in-global-warming-theory-1617426456> [Accessed September 29, 2023].
- . “Painting the Town to Fight Global Warming.” *World* (April 19, 2018). Available from <https://wng.org/roundups/are-robots-persons-too-now-1617228437> [Accessed September 29, 2023].
- Boston, Rob. “Apocalypse Now?” *Church & State* (March, 1999): 8-12.
- Boyd, Heather Hartwig. “Christianity and the Environment in the American Public.” *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 38, no. 1 (March, 1999): 36-44.
- Boyer, Paul. *When Time Shall Be No More: Prophecy Belief in Modern American Culture*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1992.
- Bradbury, John W. “Foreword.” In *Hastening The Day of God: Prophetic Messages from the International Congress on Prophecy*, edited by John W. Bradbury, 6-9. Wheaton, IL: Van Kampen Press, 1953.
- Bratton, Susan Power. *Six Billion & More: Human Population Regulation and Christian Ethics*. Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1992.
- . “The Ecotheology of James Watt.” *Environmental Ethics* 5, no. 3 (Fall, 1983): 225-236.
- Brewster, David. *Memoirs of the Life, Writings, and Discoveries of Sir Isaac Newton, Volume II*. Edinburgh, UK: Thomas Constable and Company, 1855.
- Brown, Harold O. J. “Theology, Apologetics, and Ethics.” *Christianity Today* 18, no. 11 (March 1, 1974): 70-78.
- Browning, Adam. “Rev. Pat Robertson Converts on Global Warming.” *Grist* (August 4, 2006). Available from <https://grist.org/article/rev-pat-robertson-converts-on-global-warming/> [Accessed September 29, 2023].
- Brubaker, Kenton B. “Defoliation.” In *Baker’s Dictionary of Christian Ethics*, edited by Carl F. Henry, 170. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House Company, 1973.
- Bube, Richard H. “Review of *The Late Great Planet Earth*.” *Journal of the American Scientific Affiliation* 24, no. 1 (March, 1972): 33-34.

- Buckingham, Jamie. "Acid Rain." *Charisma* (March, 1980): 10.
- . *Power For Living*. Revised edition. West Palm Beach, FL: Arthur S. DeMoss Foundation, 1983.
- . "Prophets for Profit." *Charisma & Christian Life* (October, 1988): 114.
- Bullock, Wilber L. "Ecology and Apocalypse." *Christianity Today* 15, no. 15 (April 23, 1971): 20-21, 24.
- Burgess, Wassell. *Israel, the Church, and the Coming Armageddon*. Little Rock, AR: Baptist Trumpet, 1975.
- Burkett, Larry. *Solar Flare: A Novel*. Chicago, IL: Northfield Publishing, 1997.
- . *The Coming Economic Earthquake*. Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1991.
- . *The Illuminati*. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Press, 1991.
- . *The THOR Conspiracy: The Seventy-Hour Countdown to Disaster*. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Press, 1995.
- . *Victory Over Debt: Rediscovering Financial Freedom*. Chicago, IL: Northfield Publishing, 1992.
- . *What Ever Happened to the American Dream?* Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1993.
- Burkett, Larry and T. Davis Bunn. *Kingdom Come: A Novel*. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2000.
- Burkett, Larry and William Proctor. *How To Prosper In The Underground Economy*. New York, NY: William Morrow and Company, 1982.
- Bruce, Steve. "The Rise or Fall of the Christian Right? Conflicting Reports from the Frontline." In *The Rapture of Politics: The Christian Right as the United States Approaches the Year 2000*, edited by Steve Bruce, Peter Kivisto, and William H. Swatos, Jr., 1-6. New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 1994.
- Bryan, William Jennings. *Seven Questions in Dispute*. New York, NY: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1924.

- Bryan, William Jennings and Mary Baird Bryan, *The Memoirs of William Jennings Bryan*. Chicago, IL: John C. Winston Company, 1925.
- Budiman, Rudi. "The Theology of the Cross and of the Resurrection in Our Unique Salvation: Summary Report." In *Let The Earth Hear His Voice: International Congress on World Evangelization, Lausanne, Switzerland*, edited by J. D. Douglas, 1049-1059. Minneapolis, MN: World Wide Publications, 1975.
- Bullock, Wilber L. "Ecology and Apocalypse." *Christianity Today* 15, no. 5 (April 23, 1971): 20-21, 24.
- Burnet, Thomas. *The Sacred Theory of the Earth*. London, UK: Centaur Press Limited, 1965.
- Bush, Luis. "The Challenge Before Us." In *Proclaim Christ Until He Comes: Calling the Whole Church to Take the Whole Gospel to the Whole World*, edited by J. D. Douglas, 58-62. Minneapolis, MN: World Wide Publications, 1990.
- Byle, Ann. *The Baker Book House Story*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2014.
- Campbell, Colin. "The Cult, the Cultic Milieu and Secularization." In *The Cultic Milieu: Oppositional Subcultures in an Age of Globalization*, edited by Jeffrey S. Kaplan and Heléne Lööv, 12-25. Walnut Creek, CA: Altamira Press, 2002.
- Camping, Harold. *1994?* New York, NY: Vintage Press, 1992.
- Campolo, Tony. "Rescuing the Earth." In *Salt & Light: A Christian Response to Current Issues*, edited by David J. Gyerton, 219-236. Dallas, TX: Word Publishing, 1993.
- "Car Safety Programs." *World* 1, no. 4 (April 7, 1986): 4.
- Carmody, John. "The TV Column." *Washington Post* (April 12, 1994).
- Carpenter, Joel A. *Revive Us Again: The Reawakening of American Fundamentalism*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1997.
- Carson, Rachel. *Silent Spring*. Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin, 1962.
- Case, Shirley Jackson. *The Millennial Hope: A Phase of War-Time Thinking*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1918.

- . “The Premillennial Menace.” *The Biblical World* 52, no. 1 (July, 1918): 16-23.
- . *The Revelation of John: A Historical Interpretation*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1919.
- “Chalcedon as a ‘Think Tank for the Self-Governing Christian’.” *Chalcedon* (July 29, 2017). Available at <https://chalcedon.edu/blog/chalcedon-as-a-think-tank-for-the-self-governing-christian> [Accessed September 29, 2023].
- Chick, Jack T. *Global Warming*. Rancho Cucamonga, CA: Chick Publications, 2012.
- . *How To Get Rich (And Keep It)*. Rancho Cucamonga, CA: Chick Publications, 1978.
- . *Somebody Angry?* Rancho Cucamonga, CA: Chick Publications, 2008.
- . *The Beast*. Rancho Cucamonga, CA: Chick Publications, 1966.
- . *The Great Escape*. Rancho Cucamonga, CA: Chick Publications, 1971.
- . *The Last Generation*. Rancho Cucamonga, CA: Chick Publications, 1972.
- . *The Mad Machine*. Rancho Cucamonga, CA: Chick Publications, 1975.
- Chilton, David. “Between the Covers of *Power For Living*.” *Biblical Economics Today* 7, no. 2 (February-March, 1984): 1-4.
- . *Paradise Restored: A Biblical Theology of Dominion*. Tyler, TX: Dominion Press, 1985.
- . *Productive Christians in an Age of Guilt Manipulators: A Biblical Response to Ronald Sider*. Tyler, TX: Institute for Christian Economics, 1981.
- . “Soul Food: Organic Food Really Bugs Me.” *World* 6, no. 17 (September 21, 1991): 21.
- . *The Days of Vengeance: An Exposition of the Book of Revelation*. Fort Worth, TX: Dominion Press, 1987.
- . *The Great Tribulation*. Fort Worth, TX: Dominion Press, 1987.

- “Christian Foresight into Earthly Future.” *Eternity* 28, no. 1 (January, 1977): 14.
- “Christians Should Practice Environmental Stewardship.” *Liberty Champion* 7, no. 15 (February 14, 1990): 2.
- Church, J. R. “How Near Is the Mark of the Beast?” In *Earth’s Final Days: Essays in Apocalypse III*, edited by William T. James, 273-302. Green Forest, AR: New Leaf Press, 1994.
- Clapp, Rodney. “Democracy as Heresy.” *Christianity Today* 31, no. 3 (February 20, 1987): 17-23.
- Clarkson, Frederick. “Christian Reconstructionism: Theocratic Dominionism Gains Influence.” In *Eyes Right!: Challenging the Right Wing Backlash*, edited by Chip Berlet, 59-80. Boston, MA: South End Press, 1995.
- Clough, Charles A. “Biblical Presuppositions and Historical Geology.” *Journal of Christian Reconstruction* 1, no. 1 (Summer, 1974): 35-48.
- Cohn, Norman. *The Pursuit of the Millennium: Revolutionary Millenarians and Mystical Anarchists of the Middle Ages*, Revised and expanded edition. New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1970.
- Colkmire, Lance. “Cultural Current: Clunker Nation.” *Church of God Evangel* 99, no. 12 (December, 2009): 25.
- Conn, Charles W. “Forward In The Face of Crisis.” In *Minutes of the 62nd General Assembly of the Church of God*, edited by The Church of God, 19-26. Cleveland, TN: Church of God Publishing House, 1970.
- “Contaminated Milk.” *World* 1, no. 3 (March 31, 1986): 5.
- Cookson, Clive. “Evangelicals Converted on the Environment.” *Financial Times* (December 23, 2005).
- Cooper, Lamar E. “1991 Annual Seminar Focuses on Environment.” *Light* (October-December, 1990): 7.
- Corbett, Christopher. “Energy, Ecology, Economy: A Foreboding Forecast.” In *Fore Warning: Approaching the Final Battle between Heaven & Hell*, edited by

- William T. James, 271-290. Eugene, OR: Harvest House, 1998.
- Cornwall Alliance. *Resisting the Green Dragon: A 12-Part DVD Series with Discussion Guide*. Burke, VA: Cornwall Alliance for the Stewardship of Creation, 2010.
- Cox, Raymond L. "A Station in Space." *Foursquare Magazine* 28, no. 8 (August, 1955): 10-12.
- Craig, Kevin. "Social Apologetics." In *Symposium on the Failure of the American Baptist Culture*, edited by James B. Jordan, 41-76. Tyler, TX: Geneva Divinity School, 1982.
- "Creation Care." *Lausanne Movement*. Available from <https://lausanne.org/networks/issues/creation-care> [Accessed September 29, 2023].
- Creation Research Society. *Biology: A Search for Order in Complexity*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1970.
- "Critics Fear That Reagan Is Swayed By Those Who Believe In A 'Nuclear Armageddon'." *Christianity Today* 28, no. 18 (December 14, 1984): 48, 51.
- Crouch, Paul F. *The Shadow of the Apocalypse: When All Hell Breaks Loose*. New York, NY: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 2004.
- Culbertson, William. "Are the Times of the Gentiles Drawing to a Close?" In *Hastening The Day of God: Prophetic Messages from the International Congress on Prophecy*, edited by John W. Bradbury, 41-49. Wheaton, IL: Van Kampen Press, 1953.
- Cumbey, Constance. *The Hidden Dangers of the Rainbow: The New Age Movement and Our Coming Age of Barbarism*. Lafayette, LA: Huntington House, 1983.
- . "Was Michele Bachmann Betrayed by Peter C. Waldron and Unification Church Interests?" *News With Views* (May 30, 2013). Available at <https://newswithviews.com/Cumbey/constance134.htm> [Accessed September 29, 2023].
- Cumming, John. *The End: Or, The Proximate Signs of the Close of this Dispensation*. London, UK: John Farquhar Shaw, 1855.

- Cunningham, Robert C. "When Will Christ Return?" *Pentecostal Evangel* (September 10, 1961): 6-7.
- Cuomo, Joe. "Ronald Reagan and the Prophecy of Armageddon." *Christic Institute* (October, 1984).
- Curry, Dean C. *A World Without Tyranny: Christian Faith and International Politics*. Westchester, IL: Crossway Books, 1990.
- Curry, Janel M. "Christians and Climate Change: A Social Framework of Analysis." *Perspectives on Science and Christian Faith* 60, no. 3 (September, 2008): 156-16.
- Curtis, Jesse. *The Myth of Colorblind Christians: Evangelicals and White Supremacy in the Civil Rights Era*. New York: New York University Press, 2021.
- Davis, Jack. "The Environmental Context of Piety." *Christianity Today* 18, no. 6 (December 21, 1973): 28.
- De Wit, Martinus Petrus. "Christian Economists, Environmental Externalities and Ecological Scale." *Philosophia Reformata* 78, no. 2 (2013): 179-195.
- DeHaven, Earl G. "Science and the Living Word." *Foursquare Magazine* 19, no. 5 (May, 1947): 9.
- Delaney, Carol. *Columbus and the Quest for Jerusalem*. New York, NY: Free Press, 2011.
- DeMar, Gary. *Last Days Madness: Obsession of the Modern Church*. Fourth revised edition. Atlanta, GA: American Vision, 1999.
- . *The Debate Over Christian Reconstruction*. Fort Worth, TX: Dominion Press; Atlanta, GA: American Vision Press, 1988.
- DeMar, Gary and Peter J. Leithart. *The Legacy of Hatred Continues: A Response to Hal Lindsey's The Road to Holocaust*. Tyler, TX: Institute for Christian Economics; Fort Worth, TX: Dominion Press, 1989.
- . *The Reduction of Christianity: A Biblical Response to Dave Hunt*. Fort Worth, TX: Dominion Press; Atlanta, GA: American Vision Press, 1988.
- DeMoss, Nancy Leigh. *The Rebirth of America*. Philadelphia, PA: Arthur S. DeMoss Foundation, 1986.

- Derr, Thomas Sieger. "Religion's Responsibility for the Ecological Crisis: An Argument Run Amok." *Worldview* 18, no. 1 (January, 1975): 39-45.
- Devine, Daniel James. "Boiling Over." *World* (February 26, 2010). Available from <https://wng.org/articles/boiling-over-1618067546> [Accessed September 29, 2023].
- . "Risky Regulations." *World* (January 2, 2012). Available from <https://wng.org/articles/risky-regulations-1617307616> [Accessed September 29, 2023].
- . "Rolling In Green," *World* 30, no. 12 (June 13, 2015), 73-74.
- . "Seeking A Better Climate For The World's Poor." *World* (September 18, 2014). Available from <https://wng.org/sift/seeking-a-better-climate-for-the-worlds-poor-1617419794> [Accessed September 29, 2023].
- Diamond, Sarah. *Not By Politics Alone: The Enduring Influence of the Christian Right*. New York, NY: Guilford Press, 2000.
- Diefendorf, Sarah. *The Holy Vote: Inequality and Anxiety among White Evangelicals*. Oakland, CA: University of California Press, 2023.
- DiTomasso, Lorenzo. "Apocalypticism and Popular Culture." In *The Oxford Handbook of Apocalyptic Literature*, edited by John J. Collins, 473-509. New York: Oxford University Press, 2014.
- Djupe, Paul A. and Patrick Kieran Hunt. "Beyond the Lynn White Thesis: Congregational Effects on Environmental Concern." *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 48, no. 4 (December, 2009): 670-686.
- Dobson, Ed. *50 Remarkable Events Pointing to The End: Why Jesus Could Return by A.D. 2000*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1997.
- Dobson, Ed, Ed Hinson, and Jerry Falwell. *The Fundamentalist Phenomenon: The Resurgence of Conservative Christianity*. Second edition. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1986.
- "Dobson, Others Seek Ouster of NAE Vice President." *Christianity Today* (March 2, 2007). Available at <https://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2007/marchweb-only/109-53.0.html> [Accessed September 29, 2023].

- Dochuk, Darren. *From Bible Belt to Sunbelt: Plain-Folk Religion, Grassroots Politics, and the Rise of Evangelical Conservatism*. New York, NY: W. W. Norton, 2011.
- Donohue, Kathleen. "Top Ten Countdown: Side Effects From The Growing Hole In The Ozone Layer." *Liberty Champion* 8, no. 3 (September 11, 1990): 2.
- Draper, Edythe. *The Almanac of the Christian World*. Nashville, TN: Tyndale House, 1992.
- Drosnin, Michael. *The Bible Code*. New York, NY: Simon & Schuster, 1997.
- "Dry Weather God's Judging? Theologians Say Probably Not." *World* 3, no. 10 (July 18, 1988): 8-9.
- Dubos, René. *A God Within*. New York, NY: Scribner's Sons, 1972.
- Duck, Daymond R. "Harbingers of Humanism's Hurricane." In *Fore Warning: Approaching the Final Battle between Heaven & Hell*, edited by William T. James, 67-88. Eugene, OR: Harvest House, 1998.
- . *On the Brink: Easy-to-Understand-End-Time Bible Prophecy*. Lancaster, PA: Starburst Publishers, 1995.
- Duke, Judith S. *Religious Publishing and Communications*. White Plains, NY: Knowledge Industry Publications, 1981.
- Du Mez, Kristin Kobe. *Jesus and John Wayne: How White Evangelicals Corrupted a Faith and Fractured a Nation*. New York: Liveright Publishing Corporation, 2020.
- Dyer, Charles W. "A Peace to End All Peace." In *Prophecy in Light of Today*, edited by Charles H. Dyer, 11-36. Chicago, IL: Moody Bible Institute, 2002.
- . "God's Plan For The Ages." *Baptist Bible Tribune* 4, no. 31 (March 5, 1954): 4-6.
- . *The Rise of Babylon: Sign of the End Times*. Nashville, TN: Tyndale House, 1991.
- Eckberg, Douglas Lee and T. Jean Blocker. "Christianity, Environmentalism, and the Theoretical Problem of Fundamentalism." *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 35, no. 4 (December, 1996): 343-355.

- . "Varieties of Religious Involvement and Environmental Concerns: Testing the Lynn White Thesis." *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 28, no. 4 (December, 1989): 509-517.
- Edsall, Thomas B. "Gay Rights and the Religious Right." *Washington Post* (August 10, 1992). Available from <https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/politics/1992/08/10/gay-rights-and-the-religious-right/3d6472e9-f054-4650-a917-83d05d0f56e3/> [Accessed September 29, 2023].
- Egolf, R. Terrance. *Physical Science*. Fourth edition. Greenville, SC: Bob Jones University, 2008.
- . *Physics for Christian Schools*. 2nd edition. Greenville, SC: Bob Jones University Press, 2004.
- Ehrlich, Paul. *The Population Bomb*. New York, NY: Ballantine Books, 1968.
- Ehrlich, Paul and Richard L. Harriman. *How To Be A Survivor: A Plan To Save Spaceship Earth*. New York, NY: Ballantine Books, 1971.
- Elder, William H., III. "The New Right, 1981." *Light* (March, 1981): 3-6.
- Ellul, Jacques. *The Technological Society*. Translated from French by John Wilkinson. New York, NY: Vintage Books, 1964.
- Escobar, Samuel. "Evangelism and Man's Search for Freedom, Justice and Fulfillment." In *Let The Earth Hear His Voice: International Congress on World Evangelization, Lausanne, Switzerland*, edited by J. D. Douglas, 303-326. Minneapolis, MN: World Wide Publications, 1975.
- "Eutychus and His Kin." *Christianity Today* 9, no. 10 (February 2, 1965): 23-29.
- "Eutychus and His Kin." *Christianity Today* 17, no. 9 (February 2, 1973): 12-14.
- Evangelical Climate Initiative. *Principles for Federal Policy on Climate Change*. Washington, DC: Evangelical Climate Initiative, 2007. Available from https://www.epw.senate.gov/public/_cache/files/0/4/04fdd0b9-f0f0-4492-92ae-55b392df5057/01AFD79733D77F24A71FEF9DAFCCB056.ballecitestimony_senateepwpolicyprincipals.pdf [Accessed September 29, 2023].
- Evans, Mike. *Satan, You Can't Have Me Country: A Spiritual Warfare Guide To Save*

- America*. Phoenix, AZ: TimeWorthy Books, 2015.
- . *The Return*. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 1986.
- Everest, F. Alton. "1969 Convention Probes Social Issues." *American Scientific Association Newsletter* 11, no. 2 (May 18, 1969): 1-2.
- . "Chicago." *American Scientific Association Newsletter* 11, no. 5 (December, 1969): 9-10.
- . "Chicago." *American Scientific Association Newsletter* 12, no. 2 (April, 1970): 6.
- . "Communication from Michigan." *American Scientific Association Newsletter* 3, no. 6, (December 31, 1961): 8.
- . "Convention '69 Echoes." *American Scientific Association Newsletter* 11, no. 4 (September 25, 1969): 5-6.
- . "Oregon." *American Scientific Association Newsletter* 13, no. 5 (October, 1971): 12.
- . "San Francisco Bay." *American Scientific Association Newsletter* 11, no. 5 (December, 1969): 12-13.
- . "Science, Scriptures, and Man's Environment." *American Scientific Association Newsletter* 13, no. 2 (April, 1971): 1-2.
- Falwell, Jerry. "Evangelicals and Global Warming." *World Net Daily* (November 18, 2006). Available from <https://www.wnd.com/2006/11/38937/> [Accessed September 29, 2023].
- . "The Myth of Global Warming." Sermon. Thomas Road Baptist Church, Lynchburg, VA, February 25, 2007.
- Feinberg, Charles Lee. "The Rebuilding of the Temple." In *Prophecy In The Making: Messages Prepared For Jerusalem Conference On Biblical Prophecy*, edited by Carl F. H. Henry, 91-112. Carol Stream, IL: Creation House, 1971.
- Ferré, John P. "Searching for the Great Commission: Evangelical Book Publishing Since

- the 1970s.” In *American Evangelicals and the Mass Media: Perspectives on the Relationship Between American Evangelicals and the Mass Media*, edited by Quentin J. Schultze, 99-117. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1990.
- Ferrin, Howard W. “World-Wide Crisis and the Lord’s Return.” In *Hastening The Day of God: Prophetic Messages from the International Congress on Prophecy*, edited by John W. Bradbury, 71-76. Wheaton, IL: Van Kampen Press, 1953.
- FitzGerald, Frances. *The Evangelicals: The Struggle to Shape America*. New York, NY: Simon & Schuster, 2017.
- Fornwalt, Russell J. “Pollution of Moral Waters.” *Christianity Today* 10, no. 3 (November 5, 1965): 11.
- Forsberg, Rolf and Robert Amran. *The Late Great Planet Earth*. Medford, OR: Pacific International Enterprises, 1978.
- Fowler, J. R. “Dear Fellow Ministers of the Assemblies of God.” *Minister Letters* (June 8, 1948).
- . “Keeping Free From The War Spirit.” *Ministers Letters* (June 16, 1942).
- Fowler, Robert Booth. *The Greening of Protestant Thought*. Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1995.
- Frame, Randy. “Coalition on Revival: Plan Calls for Doing Away with Public Schools, IRS.” *Christianity Today* 34, no. 17 (November 19, 1990): 57-58.
- . “Defiler of the Earth.” *Christianity Today* 35, no. 7 (June 24, 1991): 41.
- . “Greening of the Gospel?” *Christianity Today* 40, no. 13 (November 11, 1996): 82-86.
- . “Is Christ of Satan Ruler of This World?” *Christianity Today* 34, no. 4 (March 5, 1990): 42-43.
- . “The Theonomic Urge.” *Christianity Today* 33, no. 7 (April 21, 1989): 38-40.
- Frazier, Gary. *It Could Happen Tomorrow: Future Events That Will Shake The World*. Green Forest, AR: New Leaf Press, 2012.

- Frykholm, Amy. *Christian Understandings of the Future: The Historical Trajectory*. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2016.
- Fugate, Robert. "The Head Tax: The Only God-Endorsed Civil Tax." *Faith For All of Life* (July/August, 2012): 4-9.
- Gaebelein, Frank E. "Review of Current Religious Thought." *Christianity Today* 4, no. 7 (January 4, 1960): 44.
- Gallups, Carl. *Final Warning: Understanding the Trumpet Days of Revelation*. Washington, DC: WND Books, 2014.
- Gaspar, Lou. "The Population Implosion." *Biblical Economics* 1, no. 5 (October/November, 1978): 3.
- Gentry, Kenneth L. "Dispensational Postmillennialism?" *Dispensationalism in Transition* 4, no. 4 (April, 1991): 1-2.
- . *He Shall Have Dominion: A Postmillennial Eschatology*. Tyler, TX: Institute for Christian Economics, 1992.
- . "The Blessedness of Inconsistency." *Dispensationalism in Transition* 8, no. 6 (July, 1994): 1-2.
- . "The Greatness of the Great Commission." *Journal of Christian Reconstruction* 7, no. 2 (Winter, 1981): 19-47.
- . *The Greatness of the Great Commission: The Christian Enterprise in a Fallen World*. Tyler, TX: Institute for Christian Economics, 1990.
- Gibbons, Timothy J. "Students Are Dead Meat." *Liberty Champion* 14, no. 7 (February 4, 1997): 5.
- Giles, Jr., Frank H. "Consulting Editors Respond...." *Journal of the American Scientific Affiliation* 26, no. 1 (March, 1974): 16-17.
- Giles, Joshua. *Prophetic Forecast: Insights for Navigating the Future to Align with Heaven's Agenda*. Minneapolis, MN: Chosen Books, 2022.
- Gilstrap, Michael R. "A Biblical Basis For Survival Preparation." *Journal of Christian*

- Reconstruction* 8, no. 1 (Summer, 1981): 155-165.
- . “Citizen’s Paralegal Litigation Tactics.” In *Tactics of Christian Resistance*, edited by Gary North, 233-303. Tyler, TX: Geneva Divinity School Press, 1983.
- Gish, Melanie. *God’s Wounded World: American Evangelicalism and the Challenge of Environmentalism*. Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2020.
- Gore, Al. *Earth In The Balance: Ecology and the Human Spirit*. New York, NY: Plume, 1992.
- Gortner, J. Narver. “Peace As A River.” *Pentecostal Evangel* (April 26, 1953): 3-4.
- Graff, John Franklin. “*Graybeard’s*” *Lay Sermons*. Philadelphia, PA: J. B. Lippincott & Company, 1877.
- Graham, Billy. *Approaching Hoofbeats: The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse*. Waco, TX: Word Books, 1983.
- . *Storm Warning*. Dallas, TX: Word Publishing, 1992.
- . *World Aflame*. Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Company, 1965.
- Grainger, Brett Malcolm. *Church in the Wild: Evangelicals in Antebellum America*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2019.
- Greeley, Andrew. “Religion and Attitudes toward the Environment.” *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 32, no.1 (March, 1993): 19-28.
- Grem, Darren E. *The Blessings of Business: How Corporations Shaped Conservative Christianity*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2016.
- Gretzinger, Harold. “No Time To Waste.” *Foursquare Magazine* 21, no. 7 (July, 1949): 8-10.
- Grimstead, Jay and E. Calvin Beisner. *A Manifesto For The Christian Church: An Act of Contrition and Humble Repentance / A Solemn Covenant / A Statement of Essential Truths and a Call to Action*. Murphys, CA: The Coalition on Revival, 1986.
- . *Articles of Affirmation and Denial on the Kingdom of God: A Summary of the*

- Biblical and Historical View*. Murphys, CA: The Coalition on Revival, 1989.
- . *The Christian World View of Business and Occupations*. Sunnyvale, CA: The Coalition on Revival, 1989.
- . *The Christian World View of Economics*. Sunnyvale, CA: The Coalition on Revival, 1989.
- . *The Christian World View of Educating Christians on Social, Political, and Moral Issues*. Sunnyvale, CA: The Coalition on Revival, 1989.
- . *The Christian World View of Government*. Sunnyvale, CA: The Coalition on Revival, 1989.
- . *The Christian World View of Law*. Sunnyvale, CA: The Coalition on Revival, 1989.
- Gutjahr, Paul C. "The Perseverance of Print-Bound Saints: Protestant Book Publishing." In *A History of the Book in America, Volume 5: The Enduring Book: Print Culture in Postwar America*, edited by David Paul Nord, Joan Shelley Rubin, and Michael Schudson, 376-388. Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2009.
- Guth, James L., et al. "Theological Perspectives and Environmentalism among Religious Activists." *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 32, no. 4 (December, 1993): 373-382.
- Guth, James L. et al. "Faith and the Environment: Religious Beliefs and Attitudes on Environmental Policy." *American Journal of Political Science* 39, no. 2 (May 1995): 364-382.
- Hadden, Jeffrey K. *The Gathering Storm in the Churches*. Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Company, 1969.
- Haldeman, Isaac M. *The Signs of the Times*. Third edition. Toronto, Canada: Evangelical Publishers, 1910.
- Halsell, Grace. *Forcing God's Hand: Why Millions Pray for a Quick Rapture—And Destruction of Planet Earth*. Washington, DC: Crossroads International Publishers, 1999.
- . *Prophecy and Politics: Militant Evangelicals on the Road to Nuclear War*. Westport, CT: Lawrence Hill & Company, 1986.

- Ham, Ken. "Is 'Science Fiction' In Your Curriculum?" *Practical Homeschooling* 36 (2000).
- Hamilton, Kenneth. "Apologetics and Evangelization." In *Let The Earth Hear His Voice: International Congress on World Evangelization, Lausanne, Switzerland*, edited by J. D. Douglas, 1194-1205. Minneapolis, MN: World Wide Publications, 1975.
- Hammond, Pete. "The Mandate of the Laity I." In *Proclaim Christ Until He Comes: Calling the Whole Church to Take the Whole Gospel to the Whole World*, edited by J. D. Douglas, 81-84. Minneapolis, MN: World Wide Publications, 1990.
- Hand, Carl M. and Kent D. Van Liere, "Religion, Mastery-Over-Nature, and Environmental Concern." *Social Forces* 63, no. 2 (December 1, 1984): 555-570.
- Hankins, Barry. *Francis Schaeffer and the Shaping of Evangelical America*. Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 2008.
- Hanson, Richard S. *The Future of the Great Planet Earth: What Does Biblical Prophecy Mean For You?* Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Press, 1972.
- Harden, Blaine. "The Greening of Evangelicals." *Washington Post* (February 6, 2005). Available from <https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/politics/2005/02/06/the-greening-of-evangelicals/33a88bd4-4ef2-49a3-929c-23480b1d1fde/> [Accessed September 29, 2023].
- Harris, Lori. "An Introduction to Principle Approach Science." *Practical Homeschooling* 16 (1997).
- Hart, Neesa. *End of State: Now All the Rules Have Changed*. Carol Stream: IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 2003.
- Hatfield, Mark O. "Finding The Energy To Continue." *Christianity Today* 24, no. 3 (February 8, 1980): 20-24.
- Hayes, Zachary. *What Are They Saying About The End of The World?* New York, NY: Paulist Press, 1983.
- Havner, Vance. "I Shall Return." *The King's Business* 16, no. 10 (October, 1970): 26-27.
- Heggen, Bruce Allen. "A Theology for Earth: Nature and Grace in the Thought of Joseph Sittler." Ph.D. dissertation, University of Chicago, 1995.

- Hegstad, Rolan R. "Down The Road To A Christian Republic." *Ministry* (December, 1979): 4-7.
- Heitzig, Skip. *You Can Understand the Book of Revelation*. Eugene, OR: Harvest House, 2011.
- Helvarg, David. *The War Against the Greens: The "Wise-Use" Movement, the New Right, and Anti-Environmental Violence*. San Francisco, CA: Sierra Club Books, 1994.
- Henry, Carl F. H. "A Dangerous Intersection." *Christianity Today* 13, no. 23 (August 22, 1969): 23.
- . "A Necessary Jolt." *Christianity Today* 17, no. 9 (February 2, 1973): 26.
- . "De-Polluting Ecology Theology." *Christianity Today* 14, no. 16 (May 8, 1970): 25-26.
- . "Ecumenicism and Ethics." In *Baker's Dictionary of Christian Ethics*, edited by Carl F. H. Henry, 197-198. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House Company, 1973.
- . "Fulfilling God's Cultural Mandate." *Christianity Today* 24, no. 11 (February 27, 1970): 24-25.
- . "Preface." In *Prophecy In The Making: Messages Prepared For Jerusalem Conference On Biblical Prophecy*, edited by Carl F. H. Henry, 9-10. Carol Stream, IL: Creation House, 1971.
- . "Scholars' Panel Identifies Contemporary Idols." *Christianity Today* 6, no. 1 (October 13, 1961): 37-40.
- . "Terracide." *Christianity Today* 15, no. 15 (April 23, 1971): 26-27.
- . "The Gospel and Society." *Christianity Today* 18, no. 24 (September 13, 1974): 67.
- . "The Lamp of Prophecy." *Christianity Today* 15, no. 14 (April 9, 1971): 34-35.
- . "The Temptation of the Specialist." *Christianity Today* 8, no. 18 (June 5, 1964):

28.

Herbers, John. "Religious Leaders Tell of Worry On Armageddon View Ascribed to Reagan." *New York Times* (October 21, 1984): 32.

Hindson, Ed. *Final Signs*. Eugene, OR: Harvest House, 1996.

———. *Future Glory: Living in the Hope of the Rapture, Heaven, and Eternity*. Eugene, OR: Harvest House, 2021.

Hitchcock, Edward. *The Religion of Geology and Its Connected Sciences*. Boston, MA: Phillips, Sampson and Company, 1851.

Hitchcock, Mark. *Blood Moons Rising: Bible Prophecy, Israel, and the Four Blood Moons*. Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House, 2014.

———. *Who Is The Antichrist?: Answering the Question Everyone is Asking*. Eugene, OR: Harvest House, 2011.

Hitt, Russell T. "How Christian Were The Founding Fathers." *Eternity* 27, no. 7 (July, 1976): 10-11, 20-21.

Holden, Constance. "Public's Fear of Watt Is Environmentalists' Gain." *Science* 212, no. 4493 (April 24, 1981): 422.

Horton, Beka. *Book of the Revelation: Church History Includes Lives of Great Missionaries, the Cults and Things to Come*. Pensacola, FL: A Beka Book, 1993.

Houston, James M. "The Judgement of the Nations." In *Prophecy In The Making: Messages Prepared For Jerusalem Conference On Biblical Prophecy*, edited by Carl F. H. Henry, 359-379. Carol Stream, IL: Creation House, 1971.

"How Not to Give Thanks." *Christianity Today* 11, no. 4 (November 25, 1966): 26.

Howell, Kenneth J. *God's Two Books: Copernican Cosmology and Biblical Interpretation in Early Modern Science*. Notre Dame, IN: Notre Dame Press, 2004.

Hoy, W. Ivan. "Education and Morality." In *Baker's Dictionary of Christian Ethics*, edited by Carl F. H. Henry, 209-212. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House Company, 1973.

Huebner, Erinn. "A History of Christian Publishing." *The Christian Librarian* 61, no. 1 (May 1, 2018): 72–84.

Hummel, Daniel G. *The Rise and Fall of Dispensationalism: How the Evangelical Battle Over the End Times Shaped a Nation*. Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 2023.

Hunt, Dave. *A Cup of Trembling: Jerusalem and Bible Prophecy*. Eugene, OR: Harvest House, 1995.

———. *Beyond Seduction: A Return to Biblical Christianity*. Eugene, OR: Harvest House, 1987.

———. *Cosmos, Creator and Human Destiny: Answering Darwin, Dawkins, and the New Atheists*. Bend, OR: Berean Call, 2010.

———. *How Close Are We? Compelling Evidence for the Soon Return of Christ*. Eugene, OR: Harvest House, 1993.

———. *Peace, Prosperity, and the Coming Holocaust: The New Age Movement in Prophecy*. Eugene, OR: Harvest House, 1983.

———. *Whatever Happened to Heaven?* Eugene, OR: Harvest House, 1988.

———. *Y2K: A Reasoned Response to Mass Hysteria*. Eugene, OR: Harvest House, 1999.

Hunt, Dave and T. A. McMahon. *The Seduction of Christianity: Spiritual Discernment in the Last Days*. Eugene, OR: Harvest House, 1985.

Hutchings, Noah W. *The Persian Gulf Crisis and the Final Fall of Babylon*. Oklahoma City, OK: Hearthstone Publishing, 1990.

Hyer, Marjorie. "Armageddon." *Washington Post* (October 24, 1984). Available <https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/politics/1984/10/24/armageddon/8b364a1c-fadc-41e1-b2d1-b262aa08eb46/> [Accessed September 29, 2023].

"I Spent \$77,368 to Send My Child to Hell!" *World* 6, no. 3 (April 13, 1991): 23.

Ice, Thomas. "Back to the Future: Present, Practical Lessons Learned From Biblical Prophecy." *Pre-Trib Research Center* (November-December, 1989).

- . “Postmillennialism.” In *The Harvest Handbook of Bible Prophecy*, edited by Ed Hindson, Mark Hitchcock, and Tim LaHaye, 303-304. Eugene, OR: Harvest House, 2020.
- . “Reconstructionism.” In *The Harvest Handbook of Bible Prophecy*, edited by Ed Hindson, Mark Hitchcock, and Tim LaHaye, 354-357. Eugene, OR: Harvest House, 2020.
- Immel, A. Richard. “Computer Guerrillas.” Gary North, ed., *Tactics of Christian Resistance* (Tyler, TX: Geneva Divinity School Press, 1983): 210-222.
- “Individual Concern Offers Real Solutions to Earth’s Problems.” *Liberty Champion* 8, no. 3 (September 11, 1990): 2.
- Ingersoll, Julie J. *Building God’s Kingdom: Inside the World of Christian Reconstructionism*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2015.
- “Irwin A. Moon Dies; Made Religious Films.” *Los Angeles Times* (May 15, 1986).
- “It’s Not Easy Being Green.” *Christianity Today* 36, no. 6 (May 18, 1992): 14.
- Jackson, Wayne. “Premillennialism and Biblical Creationism.” *Reason & Revelation* 5 (May, 1985).
- Jacobson, Mark. “The Late Great Orson Welles.” *The Village Voice* 24, no. 5 (January 29, 1979): 42.
- James, Frank. “Evangelicals Launch Environment Crusade.” *Chicago Tribune* (February 9, 2006): 1.
- James, William T. “Introduction: Earth’s Stormy Horizon.” In *Fore Warning: Approaching the Final Battle between Heaven & Hell*, edited by William T. James, 7-23. Eugene, OR: Harvest House, 1998.
- . “It’s Not Too Late.” In *Storming Toward Armageddon: Essays in Apocalypse*, edited by William T. James, 321-327. Green Forest, AR: New Leaf Press, 1992.
- . “The Computer Messiah Comes Forth!” In *Storming Toward Armageddon: Essays in Apocalypse*, edited by William T. James, 71-92. Green Forest, AR: New Leaf Press, 1992.

———. “The Revisionists: Changing Truth into Lies.” In *The Triumphant Return of Christ: Essays in Apocalypse II*, edited by William T. James, 35-60. Green Forest, AR: New Leaf Press, 1993.

Jansen, Frank Kaleb. “World Overview Workshop.” In *Proclaim Christ Until He Comes: Calling the Whole Church to Take the Whole Gospel to the Whole World*, edited by J. D. Douglas, 457-458. Minneapolis, MN: World Wide Publications, 1990): 457-458.

Jeffrey, Grant R. *Final Warning: Economic Collapse and the Coming World Government*. Eugene, OR: Harvest House, 1996.

———. *Millennium Meltdown: Spiritual and Practical Strategies to Survive Y2K*. Nashville, TN: Tyndale House, 1998.

———. *The Global-Warming Deception: How A Secret Elite Plans to Bankrupt America and Steal Your Freedom*. Colorado Springs, CO: WaterBook, 2011.

Jenkins, John E. and George Mulfinger, Jr. *Basic Science for Christian Schools*. Greenville, SC: Bob Jones University Press, 1983.

Jeremiah, David. *After The Rapture: An End Times Survival Guide*. Minneapolis, MN: W Publishing, 2022.

———. *The Book of Signs: 31 Undeniable Prophecies of the Apocalypse*. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2019.

———. *The Coming Economic Armageddon: What Bible Prophecy Warns about the New Global Economy*. New York, NY: Faith Words, 2010.

———. *The World of the End: How Jesus’ Prophecy Shapes Our Priorities*. Nashville, TN: W Publishing, 2022.

———. *What In The World Is Going On? 10 Prophetic Clues You Cannot Afford to Ignore*. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2008.

Jeremiah, David and C. C. Carlson. *The Handwriting on the Wall*. Nashville, TN: Word Publishing, 2019.

Jones, Archie P. “The Imperative of Christian Action: Getting Involved as a Biblical

- Duty.” *Journal of Christian Reconstruction* 8, no. 1 (Summer, 1981): 113-167.
- Jones, Edwin L. *The Church In An Atomic Age*. New York, NY: World Outlook, 1947.
- Jones, Nathan E. “The Biggest Threat to the U.S.A.” *Christ In Prophecy Journal* (July 20, 2009). Available from <https://christinprophecyblog.org/2009/07/biggest-threat-to-usa/> [Accessed September 29, 2023].
- . “Biggest World Challenge of 2010.” *Christ In Prophecy Journal* (December 30, 2010). Available from <https://christinprophecyblog.org/2010/12/biggest-world-challenge-of-2010/> [Accessed September 29, 2023].
- Johnson, Andrew. “The Bible and Science.” *Church of God Evangel* 41, no. 50 (February 24, 1951): 4-5.
- Johnson, Lyndon B. “Remarks at the Signing of the Water Quality Act of 1965,.” *The American Presidency Project*, <https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/node/241304> [Accessed September 29, 2023].
- Johnston, Jerry. *The Edge of Evil: The Rise of Satanism in North America*. Dallas, TX: Word Publishing, 1989.
- Jordan, James B. “Editor’s Introduction.” In *Symposium on the Failure of the American Baptist Culture*, edited by James B. Jordan, v-xv. Tyler, TX: Geneva Divinity School.
- Kaiser, Rudolf. “Chief Seattle’s Speech(es): American Origins and European Reception.” In *Recovering the Word: Essays on Native American Literature*, edited by Brian Swann and Arnold Krupat, 525-530. (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1987.
- Kanagy, Conrad L. and Fern K. Willits. "A Greening of Religion: Some Evidence from a Pennsylvania Sample." *Social Science Quarterly* 74, no. 3 (1993): 674-683.
- Kanagy, Conrad L. and Hart M. Nelsen. "Religion and Environmental Concern: Challenging the Dominant Assumptions." *Review of Religious Research* 37, no. 1 (September, 1995): 33-45.
- Kapic, Kelly M. “Our Dependency Upon Creation.” *World* (April 13, 2020).
- Kidd, Thomas S. *Who Is an Evangelical? The History of a Movement in Crisis*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2019.

- Kinley, Jeff. *Aftershocks: Christians Entering a New Era of Global Crisis*. Eugene, OR: Harvest Prophecy, 2021.
- Kirban, Salem. *666*. Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House, 1970.
- . *1000*. Iowa Falls, IA: Riverside Book and Bible House, 1973.
- . *Countdown to Rapture*. Huntingdon Valley, PA: Salem Kirban, Inc., 1977.
- . *Guide to Survival*. Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House, 1968.
- . *I Predict*. Huntingdon Valley, PA: Salem Kirban, Inc., 1970.
- . *Questions Frequently Asked Me On Prophecy*. Revised edition. Huntingdon Valley, PA: Salem Kirban Inc., 1981.
- . *Your Last Goodbye*. Huntingdon Valley, PA: Salem Kirban, Inc., 1969.
- . *The Rise of the Antichrist*. Huntingdon Valley, PA: Salem Kirban Inc., 1978.
- . *The Tragedy of Christians in Politics*. Huntingdon Valley, PA: Salem Kirban, Inc., 1981.
- . *What In The World Will Happen Next?*. Huntingdon Valley, PA: Salem Kirban, Inc., 1994.
- Kirk, Ron. “What’s Right about Christian Education Today.” *Chalcedon Report*, no. 444 (September, 2002): 6-8.
- Kjos, Berit. *Under the Spell of Mother Earth*. Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1992.
- Klotz, John W. “A Reply By Dr. Klotz.” *Creation Research Society Quarterly* 8, no. 4 (March, 1972): 284-287.
- . “Creationism and Our Ecological Crisis.” *Creation Research Society Quarterly* 8, no. 1 (June, 1971): 13-15.
- Koenig, William. *Eye to Eye: Facing the Consequences of Dividing Israel*. Springfield, MO: 21st Century Press, 2004.

- Koop, Everett. "Prophecy Conference Meets in Jerusalem." *Eternity* 22, no. 8 (August, 1971): 25.
- Kuhn, Harold B. "The Science of Limits: The Human Side." *Christianity Today* 23, no. 25 (November 2, 1979): 86, 88.
- Laats, Adam. "Forging a Fundamentalist 'One Best System': Struggles Over Curriculum and Educational Philosophy for Christian Day Schools, 1970—1989." *History of Education Quarterly* 50, no. 1 (February, 2010): 55-83.
- LaBar, Martin. "A Message to Polluters From The Bible." *Christianity Today* 18, no. 21 (July 26, 1974): 8-12.
- LaHaye, Tim. "Millennial Views." In *The Harvest Handbook of Bible Prophecy*, edited by Ed Hindson, Mark Hitchcock, and Tim LaHaye, 255-256. Eugene, OR: Harvest House, 2020.
- . *The Battle for the Mind*. Old Tappan, NJ: Fleming H. Revell, 1980.
- . *The Battle for the Public Schools*. Old Tappan, NJ: Fleming H. Revell, 1983.
- . *The Beginning of the End*. Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House, 1972.
- . *The Bible's Influence on American History*. San Diego, CA: Master Books, 1976.
- . *The Race for the 21st Century*. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1986.
- . "Will God Destroy Russia?" In *Storming Toward Armageddon: Essays in Apocalypse*, edited by William T. James, 253-284. Green Forest, AR: New Leaf Press, 1992.
- LaHaye, Tim and Craig Parshall. *Brink of Chaos*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2012.
- . *Edge of Apocalypse*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2010.
- . *The Mark of Evil*. Grand Rapids, MI: 2014.
- . *Thunder of Heaven*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011.
- LaHaye, Tim and Jerry B. Jenkins. *Kingdom Come: The Final Victory*. Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 2007.

- . *Left Behind: A Novel of the Earth's Last Days*. Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House, 1995.
- . *The Rising: The Antichrist is Born*. Carol Stream: IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 2005.
- . *Tribulation Force: The Continuing Drama of Those Left Behind*. Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 1997.
- LaLonde, Peter and Paul LaLonde. *301 Startling Proofs and Prophecies*. Niagara Falls, Canada: Prophecy Partners, 1996.
- . *The Edge of Time: The Final Countdown Has Begun*. Eugene, OR: Harvest House, 1997.
- Lamer, Timothy. "Sunday Drivers." *World* 17, no. 47 (December 7, 2002): 9.
- Lammerts, Walter E. "The Creationist Movement in the United States: A Personal Account." *Journal of Christian Reconstruction* 1, no. 1 (Summer, 1974): 49-63.
- Land, Richard D. "Perspective: Think About It!" *Light* (April-June, 1990): 2.
- Land, Richard D. and Louis Moore. *The Earth is the Lord's: Christians and the Environment*. Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1992.
- Larsen, David Kenneth. "God's Gardeners: American Protestant Evangelicals Confront Environmentalism, 1967-2000." Ph.D. dissertation, University of Chicago, 2001.
- Lauer, Robert H. "The Failure of Science." *Christianity Today* 6, no. 16 (May 11, 1962):17-19.
- Lausanne Global Consultation on Creation Care and the Gospel. *Creation Care and the Gospel: Jamaica Call to Action*. 2012.
- Lee, B. J. "'Sorry, Let's Go Home': Miracle of the Rapture a No-Show in South Korea." *Atlanta Constitution* (October 29, 1992): A4.
- Lee, Robert G. "Christ's Objective in the Church in View of His Return." In *Hastening The Day of God: Prophetic Messages from the International Congress on Prophecy*, edited by John W. Bradbury, 160-166. Wheaton, IL: Van Kampen

- Press, 1953.
- Leggatt, Dick. "An Economic Forecast For The Eighties: A Personal Interview With Gary North." *Biblical Economics Today* 3, no. 3 (June/July, 1980):1-3.
- Leggett, Jeremy. *The Carbon War: Global Warming and the End of the Oil Era*. New York, NY: Routledge, 2001.
- Leith, Thomas H. "The Need for an Evangelical Philosophy of Science." *Journal of the American Scientific Association* 11, no. 4 (December, 1959): 3-13.
- Leopold, Aldo. *A Sand County Almanac and Sketches Here and There*. London, UK: Oxford University Press, 1949.
- Lewis, David Allen. *Dark Angels of Light*. Green Forest, AR: New Leaf Press, 1985.
- . *Prophecy 2000*. Expanded edition. Green Forest, AR: New Leaf Press, 1992.
- Lindsell, Harold. "The Lord's Day and Natural Resources." *Christianity Today* 20, no. 16 (May 7, 1976): 8-12.
- . "The Suicide of Man." In *Let The Earth Hear His Voice: International Congress on World Evangelization, Lausanne, Switzerland*, edited by J. D. Douglas, 421-428. Minneapolis, MN: World Wide Publications, 1975.
- Lindsey, Hal. *Apocalypse Code*. Palos Verdes, CA: Western Front, 1997.
- . *Planet Earth—2000 A.D.: Will Mankind Survive?* Palos Verdes, CA: Western Front, 1994.
- . *Satan Is Alive And Well On Planet Earth*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1972.
- . *The 1980's: Countdown to Armageddon*. New York, NY: Bantam Books, 1980.
- . *The Road to Holocaust*. New York, NY: Bantam Books, 1989.
- . *There's A New World Coming: "A Prophetic Odyssey."* Santa Ana, CA: Vision House Publishers, 1973.

- Lindsey, Hal and Carla C. Carlson. *The Late Great Planet Earth*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1970.
- . *The Terminal Generation: Could We Be Plunging Toward The Greatest Crisis We Will Ever Face?* Old Tappan, NJ: Fleming H. Revell, 1976.
- Lindsey, Hal and Cliff Ford. *Facing Millennial Midnight: The Y2K Crisis Confronting America and the World*. Beverly Hills, CA: Western Front, 1998.
- Lindvall, Terry and Andrew Quicke. *Celluloid Sermons: The Emergence of the Christian Film Industry, 1930–1986*. New York, NY: New York University, 2011.
- Linn, D. Wayne. “Christian—It’s Your Environment Too.” *Journal of the American Scientific Affiliation* 25, no. 1 (March, 1973): 13-16.
- Linton, Calvin D. “Higher Education: The Solution—Or Part of the Problem?” *Christianity Today* 12, no. 10 (February 16, 1968): 3-8.
- Livingstone, David N. *Darwin’s Forgotten Defenders: The Encounter Between Evangelical Theology and Evolutionary Thought*. Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1987.
- Lockyear, Herbert. “Final Issues of the Age.” In *Hastening The Day of God: Prophetic Messages from the International Congress on Prophecy*, edited by John W. Bradbury, 203-207. Wheaton, IL: Van Kampen Press, 1953.
- Logan, Brad. “The Ghost Dance Among The Paiute: An Ethnohistorical View of Documentary Evidence 1889-1893.” *Ethnohistory* 27, no. 3 (Summer, 1980): 267-288.
- Logsdon, S. Franklin. *Is The U.S.A. In Prophecy?* Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1968.
- Lowman, Michael R., George Thompson, and Kurt Grussendorf. *United States History in Christian Perspective: Heritage of Freedom*. Pensacola, FL: Beka Book Publications, 1996.
- Lutz, Stephen. “The Message Is Clear In Sandy Mush.” *World* 1, no. 11 (May 26, 1986): 8.
- Machpherson, Ian. *God’s Plan For This Planet: A Look at Future Events and How to Get Ready for Them*. Springfield, MO: Gospel Publishing House, 1977.

Mackenzie, Leslie, et al. *Biology: A Search for Order in Complexity*. Second edition. Arlington Heights, IL: Christian Liberty Press, 2004.

Maddoux, Mariln. *Seal of Gaia: A Novel of the Antichrist*. Nashville, TN: Word Publishing, 1998.

———. *What Worries Parents Most: Survival Strategies in a Chaotic World*. Eugene, OR: Harvest House, 1992.

“Mailbag.” *World* 5, no. 25 (November 17, 1990): 22.

“Mailbag.” *World* 5, no. 26 (November 24, 1990): 22.

“Mailbag.” *World* 5, no. 27 (December 8, 1990): 22.

“Mailbag.” *World* 5, no. 32 (January 26, 1991): 22.

“Mailbag.” *World* 6, no. 1 (March 30, 1991): 22.

“Mailbag.” *World* 6, no. 21 (October 19, 1991): 22.

“Mailbag.” *World* 7, no. 2 (April 4, 1992): 22.

“Mailbag.” *World* 8, no. 31 (January 15, 1994): 5.

“Mailbag.” *World* 8, no. 32 (January 22, 1994): 5.

“Mailbag.” *World* 8, no. 33 (January 29, 1994): 5.

“Mailbag.” *World* 13, no. 11 (March 21, 1998): 4.

“Mailbag.” *World* 13, on. 14 (April 11, 1998): 4.

“Mailbag.” *World* 13, no. 30 (August 8, 1998): 4.

“Mailbag.” *World* 13, no. 48 (December 12, 1998): 6.

“Mailbag.” *World* 14, no. 13 (April 3, 1999): 4.

“Mailbag.” *World* 15, no. 14 (April 8, 2000): 40.

- “Mailbag.” *World* 17, no. 33 (August 31, 2002): 29.
- “Mailbag.” *World* 17, no. 38 (October 5, 2002): 52.
- “Mailbag.” *World* 18, no. 9 (March 8, 2003): 61-62.
- Makansi, Jason. “Government Alphabet Soup: No Free Lunch.” *Practical Homeschooling* 18 (1997).
- . “Thinking Like A Scientist.” *Practical Homeschooling* 14 (1996).
- Maltby, Paul. “Fundamentalist Dominion, Postmodern Ecology.” *Ethics and the Environment* 13, no. 2 (Fall, 2008): 119-141.
- Marsden, George. *Fundamentalism and American Culture*. Second edition. New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2006.
- . “Lord of the Interior.” *The Reformed Journal* 31, no. 6 (June, 1981): 2-3.
- Marshall, Peter and David Manuel. *The Light and the Glory*. Grand Rapids, MI: Fleming H. Revell, 1977.
- Marx, Leo. “American Institutions and Ecological Ideals.” *Science* 170, no. 3961 (November 27, 1970): 945-952.
- Marzulli, L. A. “Great Deception.” In *Sooner Than You Think: A Prophetic Guide to the End Times*, edited by Sid Roth, 47-62. Shippensburg, PA: Destiny Image, 2015.
- Matthews, Arthur H. “Environment Debated As Campaign Heats Up.” *World* 3, no. 15 (September 12, 1988): 4-5.
- Maxwell, Joe. “Prophecy Books Become Big Sellers.” *Christianity Today* 35, no. 3 (March 11, 1991): 60.
- McAlvany, Don S. “American and the New World Order.” In *Earth’s Final Days: Essays in Apocalypse III*, edited by William T. James, 179-216. Green Forest, AR: New Leaf Press, 1994.
- . *Toward A New World Order: The Countdown to Armageddon*. Oklahoma City, OK: Hearthstone Publishing, 1990.

McCarthy, Colman. "James Watt & The Puritan Ethic." *Washington Post* (May 24, 1981).

McClain, Alva J. "Significant Signs of the Times." In *Hastening The Day of God: Prophetic Messages from the International Congress on Prophecy*, edited by John W. Bradbury, 30-40. Wheaton, IL: Van Kampen Press, 1953.

McGee, Daniel B. "Perspectives on the Eighties." *Light* (February-March, 1980): 6-7, 11-12.

McHarg, Ian. *Design With Nature*. Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1969.

———. *Man: Planetary Disease*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Agriculture, 1971.

McKee, Bill. *The Return: 28 Things To Look For Before Jesus Returns*. Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House, 1971.

McKeever, James. *The Almighty and the Dollar*. Medford, OR: Omega Publications, 1981.

———. *The Coming Climax of History*. Medford, OR: Omega Press, 1982.

McKenna, David L. "Christian Higher Education and World Evangelization: A Strategy for the Future." In *Let The Earth Hear His Voice: International Congress on World Evangelization, Lausanne, Switzerland*, edited by J. D. Douglas, 649-656. Minneapolis, MN: World Wide Publications, 1975.

McTernan, John P. *As America Has Done to Israel*. New Kensington, PA: Whitaker House, 2008.

McVicar, Michael J. *Christian Reconstructionism: R. J. Rushdoony and American Religious Conservatism*. Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2015.

———. "The Libertarian Theocrats." *Public Eye* 22, no. 3 (Fall, 2007): 3-10.

Meachem, Wesley. *Troubled Waters: Prophecy From A Layman's Point of View*. Second edition. New York, NY: Vantage Press, 1988.

Meier, Paul D. *The Third Millennium: A Novel*. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson

- Publishers, 1993.
- Meldrum, David. *Builders of Continents: A Fictional Preview of the Use of Atomic Power for Remodeling the Earth*. New York, NY: Exposition Press, 1957.
- Merchant, Carolyn. *The Columbia Guide to American Environmental History*. New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 2002.
- Miller, Elliot. *A Crash Course on the New Age Movement: Describing and Evaluating a Growing Social Force*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1989.
- Miller, Gareth B. "New York World's Fair." *American Scientific Association Newsletter* 5, no. 6, (December 31, 1963): 5-6.
- Miller, Mark Crispin. *Cruel and Unusual: Bush/Cheney's New World Order*. New York, NY: W. W. Norton & Company, 2004.
- Miller, Perry. *Errand into the Wilderness*. New York, NY: Harper Torchbooks, 1956.
- Mixter, Russell L. "The Population Explosion." *Journal of the American Scientific Affiliation* 25, no. 1 (March, 1973): 9-13.
- "Money's Not The Problem." *World* 8, no. 35 (February 12, 1994): 3.
- "Moody Institute Issues Religious Science Film Strips." *Baptist Bible Tribune* 3, no. 8 (September 5, 1952): 7.
- Moore, Debbie. "Premillennialist View Drives Evangelism." *Baptist Press* (October 5, 1999). Available from <https://www.baptistpress.com/resource-library/news/premillennialist-view-drives-evangelism/> [Accessed September 29, 2023].
- Moore, Louis, "CLC Speakers Encourage Focus on Government." *Light* (May-June, 1992): 4-5, 16.
- Moore, Louis and Tom Strode. "Seminar Speakers: New Age Dangers Must Not Sidetrack Earth Care Concern." *Light* (July-September, 1991): 1, 4.
- Moorhead, James H. "The Erosion of Postmillennialism in American Religious Thought, 1865-1925." *Church History* 53 (January 1, 1984): 61-77.
- Moreell, Ben. "Survival of the Species." In *Essays on Liberty: Volume I*, edited by Leonard E. Read & Dean Russell, 213-228. Irvington-on-Hudson, NY:

- Foundation for Economic Education, 1952.
- Morris, Henry M. *A History of Modern Creationism*. San Diego, CA: Master Book Publishers, 1984.
- . *Creation and the Second Coming*. El Cajon, CA: Master Books, 1991.
- . *The Genesis Record: A Scientific and Devotional Commentary on the Book of Beginnings*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1976.
- . *The Revelation Record: A Scientific and Devotional Commentary on the Prophetic Book of Revelation*. Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House, 1983; San Diego, CA: Creation-Life Publishers, 1983.
- . “Theistic Evolution.” *Creation Research Society Quarterly* 8, no. 4 (March, 1972): 269-272.
- . “World Population: Bible vs. Evolution.” *The King’s Business* 61, no. 1 (January, 1970): 18-19.
- Morris, Henry M. And John C. Whitcomb. *The Genesis Flood: The Biblical Record and Its Scientific Implications*. Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian & Reformed Publishing, 1961.
- Morris, Leon. “More Than A Matter of Labels.” *Christianity Today* 23, no. 15 (April 4, 1979): 60 & 62.
- . “One Culture.” *Christianity Today* 15, no. 16 (May 21, 1971): 55-56.
- Moyers, Bill. “‘Welcome to Doomsday’, March 24, 2005.” *Bill Moyers* (February 25, 2005). Available at <https://billmoyers.com/2005/02/25/welcome-to-doomsday-march-24-2005/> [Accessed September 29, 2023].
- . *Welcome to Doomsday*. New York, NY: New York Review of Books, 2006.
- Napier, John. *A Plaine Discovery of the Whole Revelation of St. John*. Fifth edition. Edinburgh, UK: Andro Wilson, 1645.
- National Association of Evangelicals. *For the Health of the Nation: An Evangelical Call to Civic Responsibility*. Washington, DC: National Association of Evangelicals, 2004.

- . “Resolution on Ecology.” January 1, 1970. Available at <https://www.nae.org/ecology/> [Accessed September 29, 2023].
- . “Resolution on Environment and Ecology.” January 1, 1971. Available at <https://www.nae.org/environment-and-ecology/> [Accessed September 29, 2023].
- . “Stewardship: All for God’s Glory.” January 1, 1990. Available at <https://www.nae.org/stewardship/> [Accessed September 29, 2023].
- . “What Is An Evangelical?” Available at <http://www.nae.org/what-is-an-evangelical/> [Accessed September 29, 2023].

National Public Radio. “What Would Jesus Drive?” *Rough Translation*. July 24, 2019.

National Religious Partnership for the Environment. “The Joint Appeal in Religion and Science: Statement by Religious Leaders at the Summit on Environment.” June 3, 1991. Available at <https://fore.yale.edu/sites/default/files/files/Joint%20Appeal.pdf> [Accessed September 29, 2023].

———. “Preserving and Cherishing the Earth: An Appeal for Joint Commitment in Science and Religion.” January, 1990. Available at <https://fore.yale.edu/sites/default/files/files/Preserving%20and%20Cherishing%20the%20Earth.pdf> [Accessed September 29, 2023].

“National Poll Toplines.” Climate Nexus (October 13, 2020). Available from <https://climatenexus.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/IPL-National-Climate-Change-Poll.pdf> [Accessed September 29, 2023].

“Nationwide Study Shows Concerns of Evangelical Christians over Global Warming.” Ellison Research (February 2, 2006). Available from https://web.archive.org/web/20061010210001/http://evangelicalclimateinitiative.org:80/pub/polling_report.pdf [Accessed September 29, 2023].

“Natural Radiation.” *World* 1, no. 2 (March 24, 1986): 4.

Neff, David. “Second Coming Ecology.” *Christianity Today* 52, no. 7 (July 18, 2008): 34-37.

Nelson, Shirley. “Christian Writers out on a Limb.” *The Christian Century*

- (May 2, 1990): 463-465.
- Neuhaus, Richard. *In Defense of People: Ecology and the Seduction of Radicalism*. New York, NY: MacMillan, 1971.
- Nevins, Stuart E. "Interpreting Earth History." *Journal of Christian Reconstruction* 1, no. 1 (Summer, 1974): 28-34.
- Newton, Isaac. *Observations Upon the Prophecies of Daniel and the Apocalypse of St. John*. London, UK: J. Darby & T. Browne, 1733.
- Noel, Samuel. *Dictators Cannot Win: A Study of Dictators, Their Methods of Ruling the People, Their Failures and Final Overthrow*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1941.
- Noll, Mark. *American Evangelical Christianity: An Introduction*. Hoboken, NJ: Blackwell, 2001.
- . *The Scandal of the Evangelical Mind*. Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1994.
- North, Gary. *75 Questions Your Instructors Pray You Won't Ask*. Tyler, TX: Spurgeon Press, 1984.
- . *Backward, Christian Soldiers?: An Action Manual for Christian Reconstruction*. Tyler, TX: Institute for Christian Economics, 1984.
- . "Basic Implications of the Six-Day Creation." *Journal of Christian Reconstruction* 1, no. 1 (Summer, 1974): 1-27.
- . "Books Review: *The Secret Life of Plants*." *Journal of Christian Reconstruction* 1, no. 2 (Winter, 1974): 178-180.
- . "Christ's Mind and Economic Reconstruction." *Biblical Economics Today* 6, no. 1 (December-January, 1984): 1-4.
- . "Common Grace, Eschatology, and Biblical Law." *Journal of Christian Reconstruction* 5, no. 1 (Summer, 1978): 23-64.
- . "Editor's Introduction." *Journal of Christian Reconstruction* 5, no. 1 (Summer, 1978): 1-5.

- . “Editor’s Introduction.” *Journal of Christian Reconstruction* 8, no. 1 (Summer, 1981): 1-8.
- . “God Will Take Care Of Me.” *Biblical Economics Today* 1, no. 6 (December/January, 1978): 1-2.
- . “How Not to Cure an Energy Crisis.” *The Freeman* 24, no. 2 (February, 1974): 67-73.
- . *Is The World Running Down?: Crisis in the Christian Worldview*. Tyler, TX: Institute for Christian Economics, 1988.
- . *Millennialism and Social Theory*. Tyler, TX: Institute for Christian Economics, 1990.
- . “My Obituary of David Chilton—Three Days Before He Died.” (March 4, 1997). Available from <https://www.garynorth.com/public/15703.cfm> [Accessed September 29, 2023].
- . *None Dare Call It Witchcraft*. Rochelle, NY: Arlington House, 1976.
- . *Political Polytheism: The Myth of Pluralism*. Tyler, TX: Institute for Christian Economics, 1989.
- . “Reconstructionist Renewal and Charismatic Renewal.” *Christian Reconstruction* 12, no. 3 (May-June, 1988): 1-2.
- . “Ronald Sider: *Contra Deum*.” *Biblical Economics Today* 5, no. 2 (April-May, 1982): 1-4.
- . “Rumor #213: Rushdoony Has Gone Unitarian.” *The Christian News* (August 1, 1994): 20.
- . “Soft-Core Creationism.” *Dispensationalism in Transition* 1, no. 2 (February, 1988): 1-2.
- . *The Dominion Covenant: Genesis: An Economic Commentary on the Bible, Volume 1*. Revised edition. Tyler, TX: Institute for Christian Economics, 1987.

- . “The Growth of Human Capital.” *Biblical Economics Today* 3, no. 5 (October-November, 1980): 1-4.
- . “The Intellectual Schizophrenia of the New Christian Right.” In *Symposium on the Failure of the American Baptist Culture*, edited by James B. Jordan, 1-40. Tyler, TX: Geneva Divinity School, 1982.
- . “The Journal of Christian Reconstruction.” *Journal of Christian Reconstruction* 1, no. 1 (Summer, 1974): 1.
- . “The Mythology of Spaceship Earth.” *The Freeman* 19, no. 1 (January, 1969): 683-691.
- . *Unholy Spirits: Occultism and New Age Humanism*. Fort Worth, TX: Dominion Press, 1986.
- “Now Available To You!” *Christianity Today* 6, no. 15 (April 27, 1962): 33.
- Numbers, Ronald L. *The Creationists: The Evolution of Scientific Creationism*. New York, NY: Alfred Knopf, 1992.
- Okenga, Harold J. “Fulfilled and Unfulfilled Prophecy.” In *Prophecy In The Making: Messages Prepared For Jerusalem Conference On Biblical Prophecy*, edited by Carl F. H. Henry, 291-311. Carol Stream, IL: Creation House, 1971.
- Olasky, Marvin. “Alaskan Opportunity.” *World* 17, no. 28 (July 27, 2002). Available from <https://wng.org/articles/alaskan-opportunity-1617630400> [Accessed September 29, 2023].
- . “Compassionate Environmentalism.” *World* (November 1, 2007). Available from <https://wng.org/articles/compassionate-environmentalism-1617289676> [Accessed September 29, 2023].
- . “Environmentalism.” *World* 15, no. 22 (June 3, 2000), 38.
- . “Save The Hummingbirds.” *World* 35, no. 10 (May 23, 2020): 72.
- Olson, Arnold T. “The Second Coming of Christ.” In *Prophecy In The Making: Messages Prepared For Jerusalem Conference On Biblical Prophecy*, edited by Carl F. H. Henry, 115-132. Carol Stream, IL: Creation House, 1971.

- Olson, Curt W. "New Club Hopes To Promote Environmental Awareness." *Liberty Champion* 7, no. 15 (February 14, 1990): 1.
- Olson, Nathanael. "The Crowd May Be Wrong." *Baptist Bible Tribune* 2, no. 29 (February 22, 1952): 3.
- Overman, Ralph T. "Will Science Destroy the World?" *Christianity Today* 3, no. 17 (May 25, 1959): 3-5.
- Opderbeck, David W. "Donald Trump and the End Times: How Dispensational Premillennialism Connects Christians with the Big Election Lie." *Alternate Realities: Conspiracy Theory and the Constitution and Democratic Order* 15, no. 2 (April, 2022): 544-590.
- Padilla, René. *Mission Between the Times*. Carlisle, UK: Langham Monographs, 2010.
- Parker, R. *The Tree of Life: Containing Moral & Religious Subjects, Calculated to Benefit & Interest*. Lowell, MA: 1844.
- Pate, C. Marvin and Calvin B. Haines, Jr. *Doomsday Delusions: What's Wrong with Prediction about the End of the World*. Downers Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity Press, 1995.
- Peacock, Guy. "Where Do We Go From Here?" *Foursquare Magazine* 27, no. 1 (January, 1954): 11-13, 33.
- Pearcey, Nancy R. and Charles B. Thaxton. *The Soul of Science: Christian Faith and Natural Philosophy*. Westchester, IL: Crossway Books, 1994.
- Peifer, Jared L., Elain Howard Ecklund and Cara Fullerton. "How Evangelicals from Two Churches in the American Southwest Frame Their Relationship with the Environment." *Review of Religious Research* 56, no. 3 (September, 2014): 373-397.
- Perkins, Tony and Harry R. Jackson, Jr. *Personal Faith, Public Policy*. Lake Mary, FL: FrontLine, 2008.
- Perry Ted. *Home*. Southern Baptist Ration and Television Commission, 1972.
- Petersen, William J. *Those Curious New Cults*. New Canaan, CT: Keats Publishing, 1975.
- Pierard, Richard V. "The Great Eclipse." *Eternity* 35, no. 2 (February, 1984): 14-19.

- Pinkston, William S., Jr. and David R. Anderson. *Life Sciences for Christian Schools*. Second edition. Greenville, SC: Bob Jones University, 1997.
- Pitts, Fountain E. *A Defence of Armageddon: or, Our Great Country Foretold in the Holy Scriptures*. Baltimore, MD: J. W. Bull, 1859.
- Plowman, Edward E. "Is Morality All Right?" *Christianity Today* 23, no. 25 (November 2, 1979): 76-85.
- Pogue, Neall W. *The Nature of the Religious Right: The Struggle Between Conservative Evangelicals and the Environmental Movement*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2022.
- . "The Religious Right's Compassionate Steward and Conservationist: The Lost Philosophies of Pat Robertson, 1977–1989." *Environmental Ethics* 38 (Winter, 2016): 483-497.
- Polkinghorne, John. "Christianity and Science." In *The Oxford Handbook of Religion and Science*, edited by Philip Clayton and Zachary Simpson, 57-70. New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2008.
- "Polluter Fined." *Baptist Bible Tribune* 21, no. 44 (May 14, 1971): 6.
- Price, George McCready. *Feet of Clay: The Unscientific Nonsense of Historical Geology*. Malverne, NY: Christian Evidence League, 1949.
- . *Genesis Vindicated*. Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1941.
- . *God's Two Books: Plain Facts about Evolution, Geology, and the Bible*. Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1911.
- . *Illogical Geology: The Weakest Point in the Evolution Theory*. Los Angeles, CA: The Modern Heretic Company, 1906.
- . *The Fundamentals of Geology and their Bearings on the Doctrine of a Literal Creation*. Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1913.
- . *The Geological-Ages Hoax: A Plea for Logic in Theoretical Geology*. New York, NY: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1931.

- . *The Greatest of the Prophets: A New Commentary on the Book of Daniel*. Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1955.
- . *The New Geology: A Textbook for Colleges, Normal Schools, and Training Schools*. Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1923.
- . *The Time of the End*. Nashville, TN: Southern Publishing Association, 1967.
- Pride, Bill. “The Foundations of Science.” *Practical Homeschooling* 76 (2007).
- Pride, Mary. *All The Way Home: Power For Your Family To Be Its Best*. Westchester, IL: Crossway Books, 1989.
- . “Homeschooling Invaded by Marketers.” *Practical Homeschooling* 10 (1995).
- . *The Big Book of Home Learning*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 1986.
- . *The Big Book of Home Learning: Volume 3: Teen & Adult*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 1991.
- . *The Greenie*. Brentwood, TN: Wolgemuth & Hyatt, 1990.
- . *The New Book of Home Learning*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 1988.
- . *The Next Book of Home Learning*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 1987.
- . *The Way Home: Beyond Feminism, Back to Reality*. Westchester, IL: Crossway Books, 1985.
- Pride, Mary and Paul DeParrie. *Ancient Empires of the New Age*. Westchester, IL: Crossway Books, 1989.
- “Prophecy: Even the Air We Breathe Is Foul.” *The Bridegroom Messenger* 55, no. 6 (May, 1967): 7.
- Pulliam, Sarah. “Interview: NAE President Leith Anderson on Richard Cizik’s Resignation.” *Christianity Today* (December 11, 2008). Available at <https://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2008/decemberweb-only/150-41.0.html> [Accessed September 29, 2023].
- Quinley, Harold E. *The Prophetic Clergy: Social Activism Among Protestant Ministers*. New York, NY: John Wiley & Sons, 1974.

- Reagan, David. "A Confused Book about Revelation." *Christ In Prophecy Journal* (January 27, 2015). Available from <https://christinprophecyblog.org/2015/01/a-confused-book-about-revelation/> [Accessed September 29, 2023].
- . *America the Beautiful? The United States in Bible Prophecy*. Second edition. McKinney, TX: Lamb & Lion Ministries, 2006.
- . "Does God Still Speak Through Signs of Nature? Part 3 of 3." *Christ In Prophecy Journal* (May 11, 2020). Available from <https://christinprophecyblog.org/2020/05/does-god-still-speak-through-signs-of-nature-part-3-of-3/> [Accessed September 29, 2023].
- Reeves, Marjorie *The Influence of Prophecy in the Later Middle Ages: A Study in Joachimism*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1969.
- Reid, W. Stanford. "Industrial Revolution." In *Baker's Dictionary of Christian Ethics*, edited by Carl F. Henry, 326-327. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House Company, 1973.
- Reidel, Carl H. "Christianity and the Environmental Crisis." *Christianity Today* 15, no. 15 (April 23, 1971): 4-8.
- . "Young Churchmen Eye the Seventies: Physical Science." *Christianity Today* 24, no. 7 (January 2, 1970): 26.
- "Religion and Science." Pew Research Center (October 22, 2015). Available from <https://www.pewresearch.org/science/2015/10/22/science-and-religion/> [Accessed September 29, 2023].
- Rhodes, Ron. *End-Times Super Trends*. Eugene, OR: Harvest House, 2017.
- . *Jesus and the End Times: What He Said...and What the Future Holds*. Eugene, OR: Harvest House, 2019.
- . *New Babylon Rising: The Emerging End Times World Order*. Eugene, OR: Harvest House, 2019.
- . *Spiritual Warfare in the End Times*. Eugene, OR: Harvest House, 2020.
- . *The Coming Oil Storm*. Eugene, OR: Harvest House, 2010.

- Richards, Jay. "Evangelicals and the Environment: How Close as Alliance." Institute on Religion and Democracy. "God Is Great. Is God Green? A Conference on Evangelicals and the Environmental Task." Washington D.C., November 14, 2007.
- Robbins, John W. "Ecology: The Abolition of Man." *Creation Research Quarterly* 8, no. 4 (March, 1972): 280-284.
- . "The Political Philosophy of the Founding Fathers." *Journal of Christian Reconstruction* 3, no. 1 (Summer, 1976): 52-68.
- . "Theonomic Schizophrenia." *The Trinity Review* (February, 1992): 1-7.
- Robertson, Pat. "Pat Robertson." In *What Israel Means to Me*, edited by Alan Dershowitz, 292-297. Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, 2006.
- . *The New Millennium: Ten Trends that Will Impact You and Your Family by the Year 2000*. Dallas, TX: Word Publishing, 1990.
- . *The Secret Kingdom*. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 1982.
- Rose, Delbert R. "Vice." In *Baker's Dictionary of Christian Ethics*, edited by Carl F. Henry, 694-695. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House Company, 1973.
- Rose, James B. *A Guide to American Christian Education for the Home and School: The Principle Approach*. Camarillo, CA: American Christian History Institute, 1987.
- Rose, Tom. "America and the Underdeveloped World." *Biblical Economics Today* 2, no. 2 (April/May, 1979): 3-4.
- . "How To Reclaim The American Dream Via Constitutional And Christian Reconstruction." *Biblical Economics Today* 1, no. 2 (April/May, 1978): 3-4.
- Roston, Eric. "Preaching for the Planet." *Time* 167, no. 14 (April 3, 2006): 65.
- Ruark, James E. *The House of Zondervan*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2006.
- Rushdoony, Mark. "Books, My Father's Treasure." *Chalcedon Report* 439 (March 1, 2002): 9-10.

- . “How God Provided a Home for Chalcedon.” *Chalcedon* (July 18, 2018). Available at <https://chalcedon.edu/resources/articles/how-god-provided-a-home-for-chalcedon> [Accessed September 29, 2023].
- . “Rousas John Rushdoony: A Brief History, Part IV: The ‘Painful Years’.” *Faith For All of Life* (July/August, 2016): 2-14. Available at <https://chalcedon.edu/magazine/rousas-johnrushdoony-a-brief-history-part-iv-the-painful-years> [Accessed September 29, 2023].
- Rushdoony, Rousas J. “Christian Missions and Indian Culture.” *Westminster Theological Journal* 12, no. 1 (November, 1949): 1-12.
- . “Has The Alaskan Pipeline Been A Disaster?” Undated sermon.
- . “Imitation.” *The Freeman* 23, no. 9 (September, 1973): 566-572.
- . *Law & Liberty*. Nutley, NJ: Craig Press, 1971.
- . “Nuclear Energy and Weapons.” *Easy Chair*, episode 18, May 10, 1982.
- . “Postmillennialism Versus Impotent Religion.” *Journal of Christian Reconstruction* 3, no. 2 (Winter, 1976): 122-127.
- . *Preparation For The Future*. San Carlos, CA: The Pamphleteers, 1966.
- . *Systematic Theology In Two Volumes*. Vallecito, CA: Ross House Books, 1994.
- . *The Biblical Philosophy of History*. Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company, 1969.
- . “The Coming Nuclear Attack.” *Easy Chair*, episode 200, August 11, 1989.
- . “The Dominion Mandate.” Undated lecture.
- . “The Family.” *The Freeman* 23, no. 7 (July, 1973): 429-432.
- . *The Institutes of Biblical Law: Volume I*. Nutley, NJ: Craig Press, 1973; Vallecito, CA: Ross House Books, 1982-1999.
- . “The Moral Foundations of Money.” *The Chalcedon Foundation* (January 13, 1966).

- . “The Myth of an American Enlightenment.” *Journal of Christian Reconstruction* 3, no. 1 (Summer, 1976): 91-96.
- . *The Myth of Over-Population*. Fairfax, VA: Thoburn Press, 1969.
- . *The Mythology of Science*. Nutley, NJ: Craig Press, 1967.
- . *The Nature of the American System*. Nutley, NJ: Craig Press, 1965.
- . *The Politics of Guilt and Pity*. Nutley, NJ: Craig Press, 1970.
- . “The Revival of Paganism in the Green Movement.” Undated lecture.
- . *The Roots of Reconstruction*. Vallecito, CA: Ross House Books, 1991.
- . “What Is Overpopulation?” *The Freeman* 20, no. 2 (February 1, 1970): 98-105.
- Russ, Mike. *The Battle for Planet Earth: From Abraham to Armageddon*. New York, NY: Ballantine Books, 1981.
- Rust, Eric C. *Nature—Garden or Desert?* Waco, TX: Word Books, 1971.
- Ryrie, Charles C. *The Final Countdown*. Second edition. Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1983.
- Sabin, Paul. *The Bet: Paul Ehrlich, Julian Simon, and Our Gamble over Earth’s Future*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2013.
- Salinas, Daniel. *Latin American Theology in the 1970’s: The Golden Decade*. Boston, MA: Brill, 2009.
- Sandeen, Ernest. *The Roots of Fundamentalism: British and American Millenarianism, 1800-1930*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1970.
- Sapp, W. David. “A Responsible, Simple, Christian Lifestyle.” *Light* (November 1981): 3-4.
- Schaeffer, Edith. *Lifelines: The Ten Commandments For Today*. Westchester, IL: Crossway Books, 1982.

———. “The Most Dangerous Pollution of All.” *Christianity Today* 18, no. 22 (August 16, 1974): 26-27.

———. *The Tapestry: The Life and Times of Francis and Edith Schaeffer*. Waco, TX: Word Books, 1981.

Schaeffer, Francis. *Death In The City*. Downers Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity Press, 1969.

———. *How Should We Then Live?: The Rise and Decline of Western Thought and Culture*. Old Tappan, NJ: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1976.

———. *No Little People: Sixteen Sermons for the Twentieth Century*. Downers Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity Press, 1974.

———. *Pollution and the Death of Man: The Christian View of Ecology*. Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House, 1970.

———. *The Church At The End of The 20th Century*. Downers Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity Press, 1970.

Schaeffer, Frank. *Crazy for God: How I Grew Up as One of the Elect, Helped Found the Religious Right, and Lived to Take All (or Almost All) of It Back*. New York, NY: Carroll & Graf Publishers, 2007.

Schäfer, Axel. *Countercultural Conservatives: American Evangelicalism From the Postwar Revival to the New Christian Right*. Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 2011.

Scheaffer, Robert. “None Dare Call It Witchcraft.” *Reason* (July, 1977). Available at <https://reason.com/1977/07/01/none-dare-call-it-witchcraft/> [Accessed September 29, 2023].

Scherer, Glenn. “The Godly Must Be Crazy.” *Grist* (October 27, 2004). Available from <https://web.archive.org/web/20041115035502/http://www.grist.org/news/maindish/2004/10/27/scherer-christian/index.html> [Accessed September 29, 2023].

Schlossberg, Herbert. “Imperatives for Economic Development.” In *Freedom, Justice, and Hope: Toward a Strategy for the Poor and the Oppressed*, edited by Marvin Olasky, 99-118. Westchester, IL: Crossway Books, 1988.

Schlossberg, Herbert and Marvin Olasky. *Turning Point: A Christian Worldview*

- Declaration*. Westchester, IL: Crossway Books, 1987.
- Schrepfer, Susan R. *The Fight to Save the Redwoods: A History of Environmental Reform, 1917-1978*. Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1983.
- “Scientific Exploitation of Nature.” *Christianity Today* 11, no. 8 (January 20, 1967): 28.
- Scofield, C. I. *Scofield’s Reference Bible*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1909.
- . *What Do The Prophets Say?* Philadelphia, PA: The Sunday School Times Company, 1916.
- Selbrede, Martin G. “First Major Book About R. J. Rushdoony.” *Faith For All of Life* (May/June, 2015): 4-12.
- . “God’s Law: The Only Hope for Animals.” *Faith For All of Life* (May/June, 2011): 6-11.
- . “Reinventing Leadership.” *Faith For All of Life* (September/October, 2013): 4-6.
- . “The Emperor’s Continued Nudity: Jeff Sharlet’s Critique of Historiography Examined.” *Faith For All of Life* (March/April, 2007): 16-21.
- . “The Problem That Chalcedon Poses.” *Faith For All of Life* (September/October, 2008): 24-32.
- “September Evangel Poll: Which Issue Will Influence Your Vote The Most In The Upcoming National Election?” *Church of God Evangel* 102, no. 10 (October, 2012): 5.
- Shaiko, Ronald. “Religion, Politics, and Environmental Concern: A Powerful Mix of Passions.” *Social Science Quarterly* 68, no. 2 (June, 1987): 244-262.
- Sharlet, Jeff. *The Family: The Secret Fundamentalism at the Heart of American Power*. New York, NY: HarperCollins, 2008.
- Sheer, Robert. *With Enough Shovels: Reagan, Bush, and Nuclear War*. New York, NY: Random House, 1982.
- Sheldon, Joseph Kenneth. *Rediscovery of Creation: A Bibliographic Study of the Church’s Response to the Environmental Crisis*. Metuchen, NJ: American

- Theological Library Association & Scarecrow Press, 1992.
- Shepherd, Norman. "Justice to Victory." *Journal of Christian Reconstruction* 5, no. 1 (Summer, 1978): 15-22.
- Sherkat, Darren E. and Christopher G. Ellison. "Structuring the Religion-Environment Connection: Identifying Religious Influences on Environmental Concern and Activism." *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 46, no. 1 (March, 2007): 71-85.
- Sider, Ronald J. *Rich Christian in an Age of Hunger: A Biblical Study*. New York, NY: Paulist Press, 1977.
- Silliman, Daniel. "Died: Gary North, Who Saw Austrian Economics in the Bible and Disaster on the Horizon." *Christianity Today* (March 3, 2022). Available from <https://www.christianitytoday.com/news/2022/march/gary-north-died-reconstruction-economics-ron-paul.html> [Accessed September 29, 2023].
- . "EFCAs Now Considers Premillennialism a Non-Essential." *Christianity Today* (August 23, 2019). Available from <https://www.christianitytoday.com/news/2019/august/efca-drops-premillennialism-evangelical-free-church-teds.html> [Accessed September 29, 2023].
- . *Reading Evangelicals: How Christian Fiction Shaped a Culture and a Faith*. Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2021.
- Simmons, Paul D. "Smog." In *Baker's Dictionary of Christian Ethics*, edited by Carl F. Henry, 628-629. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House Company, 1973.
- Simon, Julian. *The Ultimate Resource*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1977.
- Simon, Julian and Herman Kahn. *The Resourceful Earth: A Response to 'Global 2000'*. New York, NY: Wiley Blackwell, 1984.
- Sittler, Joseph, Jr. "A Theology for Earth." *The Christian Scholar* 37, no. 3 (September, 1954): 367-374.
- Skinner, Tom. "Modern Youth In Biblical Perspective." In *Prophecy In The Making: Messages Prepared For Jerusalem Conference On Biblical Prophecy*, edited by

- Carl F. H. Henry, 261-287. Carol Stream, IL: Creation House, 1971.
- Smith, Gregory A. "A Survey of Religious Book Publishing with Implications for Collection Development in Christian College Libraries." *Faculty Publications and Presentations* 7 (January, 2002): 1-10.
- Smith, Noel. "America's Impending Calamities And How Christian People Should Face Them, Part VI: My Personal Views On Some Matters." *Baptist Bible Tribune* 9, no. 18 (November 14, 1958): 4-5.
- . "America's Impending Calamities And How Christian People Should Face Them, Part VII: What Lies Ahead Of Us And How We Should Face It." *Baptist Bible Tribune* 1, no. 15 (October 16, 1950): 1, 4-5.
- . "An Era of Sorrows." *Baptist Bible Tribune* 1, no. 15 (October 16, 1950): 4.
- . "And Now He's Gone." *Baptist Bible Tribune* 4, no. 39 (April 9, 1954): 4-5.
- . "News and Comments." *Baptist Bible Tribune* 1, no. 2 (November 10, 1950): 3.
- . "News and Comments." *Baptist Bible Tribune* 1, no. 2 (September 28, 1951): 4.
- . "The Bees: They Dance & Follow The Sun Rays." *Baptist Bible Tribune* 5, no. 9 (September 10, 1954): 1, 8.
- . "The Book of Exodus: An Introductory Lecture." *Baptist Bible Tribune* 3, no. 12 (October 10, 1952): 4.
- . "The Fellowship In Alaska." *Baptist Bible Tribune* 20, no. 13 (September 26, 1969): 6.
- . "The Scriptures: The Interpreter of the Perilous Times." *Baptist Bible Tribune* 6, no. 16 (November 4, 1955): 4-7.
- . "The Tribune." *Baptist Bible Tribune* 1, no. 1 (June 23, 1950): 4.
- . "The World State." *Baptist Bible Tribune* 2, no. 27 (February 28, 1952): 6-7.
- . "To The Jews." *Baptist Bible Tribune* 3, no. 35 (April 3, 1953): 4-5.
- Smith, Wilbur. "Signs of the Second Advent of Christ." In *Prophecy In The Making: Messages Prepared For Jerusalem Conference On Biblical Prophecy*, edited by

- Carl F. H. Henry, 187-213. Carol Stream, IL: Creation House, 1971.
- . *This Atomic Age and the Word of God*. Boston, MA: W. A. Wilde Company, 1948.
- . *World Crises and the Prophetic Scriptures*. Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1950.
- Snyder, Gary. "Energy is Eternal Delight." In *The New Environmental Handbook*, edited by Garrett De Bell, 60-62. San Francisco, CA: Friends of the Earth, 1980.
- Snyder, John W. "Christians in the Academic Arena." *Christianity Today* 13, no. 1 (October 11, 1968): 10-11.
- Solomon, Deborah. "Earthy Evangelist." *New York Times* (April 3, 2005): 17.
- Solomon, Lois K. "God, Green Meet in the Middle." *South Florida Sun-Sentinel* (March 1, 2007).
- Southern Baptist Sunday School Board. "Pollution Survey." *Research Roundup* 5, no. 6 (March 31, 1971): 1.
- "Space Age Teaching Tools." *Christianity Today* 3, no. 23 (August 31, 1959): 7-8.
- "Stacking Sandbags against a Conservative Flood." *Christianity Today* 23, no. 25 (November 2, 1979): 76-77.
- Stall, Bill. "Watt Raps 'Elite Groups' in Environmental Movement." *Los Angeles Times* (March 24, 1981).
- Steele, DeWitt. *Investigating God's World*. Pensacola, FL: A Beka Book Publications, 1977.
- Stein, Stephen J. "Transatlantic Extensions: Apocalyptic in Early New England." In *The Apocalypse in English Renaissance Thought and Literature*, edited by C. A. Patrides and Joseph Wittreich, 266-298. Manchester, UK: Manchester University Press, 1984.
- Steinhart, Peter. "Fundamentals." *Audubon* 83, no. 5 (September, 1981): 5-14.
- Stevens, B. D. "Saturday Night Bible Readers: America's Darkest Hour." *Baptist Bible*

- Tribune* 1, no. 34 (March 2, 1951): 1, 8.
- Steward, Theophilus Gould. *The End of the World: Or, Clearing the Way for the Fullness of the Gentiles*. Philadelphia, PA: A.M.E. Church Book Rooms, 1888.
- Stocker, John F. *God's Roadmap for the 90's*. Shippensburg, PA: Companion Press, 1991.
- Stone, Perry. *Deciphering End-Times Prophetic Codes*. Lake Mary, FL: Charisma House, 2015.
- Stoner, Peter and Robert Newman. *Science Speaks: Scientific Proof of the Accuracy of Prophecy and the Bible*. Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1953.
- Stott, John. *The Lausanne Covenant: Complete Text with Study Guide*. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2009.
- Strode, Tom. "'We Get It!' Environmental Campaign Launches with Goal to be Biblical, Factual." *Baptist Press* (May 16, 2008). Available at <https://www.baptistpress.com/resource-library/news/we-get-it-environmental-campaign-launches-with-goal-to-be-biblical-factual/> [Accessed September 29, 2023].
- Strupp, Joe. "Bill Moyers Apologizes to James Watt for Apocryphal Quote." *Star Tribune* (February 9, 2005). Available from <http://www.startribune.com/stories/1519/5232182/> [Accessed September 29, 2023].
- Sumrall, Lester. "Famines, Pestilence, Earthquakes, as Man Rebels." In *Earth's Final Days: Essays in Apocalypse III*, edited by William T. James, 63-76. Green Forest, AR: New Leaf Press, 1994.
- "Supplement to the Minutes: Church of God Teachings." In *Minutes of the 62nd General Assembly of the Church of God*, edited by The Church of God, 21. Cleveland, TN: Church of God Publishing House, 1988.
- "Survey Explores Who Qualifies As an Evangelical." Barna Group, January 18, 2007. Available at <https://www.barna.com/research/survey-explores-who-qualifies-as-an-evangelical/> [Accessed September 29, 2023].
- Sutton, Matthew Avery. *American Apocalypse: A History of Modern Evangelicalism*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2014.

- Sutton, Ray R. *That You May Prosper: Dominion By Covenant*. Tyler, TX: Institute for Christian Economics, 1987.
- Suzuki, Daisetz T. *Studies in Zen*. New York, NY: Dell Publishing, 1955.
- Swaggart, Jimmy. *Armageddon: The Future of Planet Earth*. Baton Rouge, LA: Jimmy Swaggart Ministries, 1987.
- Swartz, David R. *Facing West: American Evangelicals in an Age of World Christianity*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2020.
- . *Moral Minority: The Evangelical Left in an Age of Conservatism*. Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012.
- Tarakeshwar, Nalini, et al. “The Sanctification of Nature and Theological Conservatism: A Study of Opposing Religious Correlates of Environmentalism.” *Review of Religious Research* 42, no. 4 (June, 2001): 387-404.
- Taylor, Bron. *Dark Green Religion: Nature Spirituality and the Planetary Future*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2010.
- Taylor, Charles R. *Bible Prophecy News* (April-May-June, 1992).
- “Telstar Launching Suggests Fulfillment of Bible Prophecy.” *Christian Today* 6, no. 22 (August 3, 1962): 22.
- Ten Harmsel, Larry and Reinder Van Til. *An Eerdmans Century, 1911–2011*. Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co.
- Terrell, Timothy D. and Glenn Moots. “One Protestant Tradition’s Interface with Austrian Economics: Christian Reconstruction as Critic and Ally.” *Journal of Markets & Morality* 9, no. 1 (Spring, 2006): 91-114.
- Thanksgiving Workshop on Evangelicals and Social Concerns. “A Declaration of Evangelical Social Concern.” In *The Chicago Declaration*, edited by Ronald J. Sider, 1-2. Carol Stream, IL: Creation House, 1974.
- “The Art of Teaching.” *The Bridegroom Messenger* 55, no. 5 (April, 1967): 3-4.
- “The Environmental Veep.” *World* 7, no. 23 (October 31, 1992): 8-9.
- “The Lost Grace of Thanksgiving.” *Christianity Today* 5, no. 3 (November 7, 1960): 24.

“The Moral Majority in the CBA Market,” *Publishers Weekly* (August 21, 1981): 30-31.

“The Passing and the Permanent.” *Pentecostal Evangel* (May 19, 1945).

Third Lausanne Congress. *The Cape Town Commitment: A Confession of Faith and a Call to Action*. 2010.

Thompson, Donald W. *Image of the Beast*, film (Des Moines, IA: Mark IV Pictures, 1981).

Thorson, Walter R. “The Spiritual Dimensions of Science.” In *Horizons of Science: Christian Scholars Speak Out*, edited by Carl. F. H. Henry, 217-257. San Francisco, CA: Harper & Row, 1978.

Tickle, Phyllis. “CBA in Atlanta: The Best and Biggest Show Yet.” *Publishers Weekly* (August 2, 1993): 16-17.

Toynbee, Arnold. “The Genesis of Pollution.” *New York Times*, September 16, 1973.

Torrey, R. A. “Unprincipled Methods of Post-Millennialists.” *The King’s Business* 9, no. 4 (April, 1918): 276-277.

Trimble, Brent. “Greenhouse Effect Lacks Concrete Evidence; Blown Out of Proportion.” *Liberty Champion* 10, no. 6 (October 7, 1992): 7.

Tyndale, V. S. C. “Apologetics in Evangelism Report.” In *Let The Earth Hear His Voice: International Congress on World Evangelization, Lausanne, Switzerland*, edited by J. D. Douglas, 1203-1205. Minneapolis, MN: World Wide Publications, 1975.

“U.S. Public Becoming Less Religious,” Pew Research Center (November 3, 2015). Available from <https://www.pewresearch.org/religion/2015/11/03/u-s-public-becoming-less-religious/> [Accessed September 29, 2023].

United States and James G. Watt. *Briefing by the Secretary of the Interior: Oversight Hearing Before the Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs, House of Representatives; Ninety-Seventh Congress, First Session; on Briefing by the Secretary of the Interior; Hearing Held in Washington, D.C.; February 5, 1981*. Washington D. C.: Government Printing Office, 1981.

Vaca, Daniel. *Evangelicals Incorporated: Books and the Business of Religion in America*.

- Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2019.
- Van Capelleveen, Jan J. "A Theology For Today's Youth." *Christianity Today* 13, no. 23 (August 22, 1969): 11-13.
- Van Impe, Jack. *11:59...And Counting!* Troy, MI: Jack Van Impe Ministries, 1983.
- . *Everything You Always Wanted To Know About Prophecy But Didn't Know Who To Ask!* Troy, MI: Jack Van Impe Ministries, 1980.
- . *Revelation Revealed: A Verse-By-Verse Study.* Dallas, TX: Word Publishing, 1982.
- . *Your Future: An A-Z Index to Prophecy.* Troy, MI: Jack Van Impe Ministries, 1989.
- Van Impe, Rexella. *That Mystery Called Life! Enlightening Lessons for Successful Christian Living.* Troy, MI: Jack Van Impe Ministries, 1990.
- Van Leeuwen, Arend. *Christianity in World History: The Meeting of the Faiths of East and West.* New York, NY: Scribner's Sons, 1966.
- Van Til, Cornelius. *Defense of the Faith.* Philadelphia, PA: The Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company, 1955.
- . "The Doctrine of Creation and Christian Apologetics." *Journal of Christian Reconstruction* 1, no. 1 (Summer, 1974): 69-80.
- Verhaagen, Dave. *How White Evangelicals Think: The Psychology of White Conservative Christians.* Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2022.
- Veith, Gene Edward, Jr. *Postmodern Times: A Christian Guide to Contemporary Thought and Culture.* Westchester, IL: Crossway Books, 1994.
- Veldman, Robin Globus. *The Gospel of Climate Skepticism: Why Evangelical Christians Oppose Action on Climate Change.* Oakland, CA: University of California Press, 2019.
- Vick, G. B. "The Things Most Surely Believed Among Us." *Baptist Bible Tribune* 1, no. 49 (June 15, 1951): 1-3, 8.

Walker, J. H. "Religion and The World: Atomic Potency." *Church of God Evangel* 36, no. 29 (September 22, 1945): 4.

Wallis, Jim. *The Great Awakening*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2008.

Walvoord, John F. *Armageddon, Oil, and the Middle East Crisis: What the Bible says about the Future of the Middle East and the End of Western Civilization*. Revised edition. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1990.

———. "Foreword." In *Things To Come*, by J. Dwight Pentecost, ix-x. Grand Rapids, MI: Dunham Publishing, 1958.

Ward, W. R. *Early Evangelicalism: A Global Intellectual History, 1670-1787*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2006.

"Water Is No Luxury." *Christianity Today* 10, no. 20 (July 8, 1966): 25-26.

Watt, James. "Ours is the Earth." *Saturday Evening Post* (January-February, 1982): 74-75.

———. "The Religious Left's Lies." *Washington Post*, May 21, 2005. Available from <https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/opinions/2005/05/21/the-religious-lefts-lies/c348908f-9c4a-4f73-ac88-603de131a06a/> [Accessed September 29, 2023].

Watt, Leilani. *Caught In The Conflict: My Life With James Watt*. Eugene, OR: Harvest House, 1984.

Webber, David and Noah W. Hutchings. *Is This the Last Century?* Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 1979.

Weber, Timothy P. "The Great Second Coming Alert." *Eternity* 32, no. 4 (April, 1981): 18-23.

"Welcome to Coalition on Revival." Coalition on Revival. Available from <https://www.reformation.net/> [Accessed September 29, 2023].

Wetzel, John S. *Basic Chemistry for Christian Schools*. Greenville, SC: Bob Jones University Press, 1985

Whisenant, Edgar C. *On Borrowed Time: 88 Reasons Why The Rapture Will Be In 1988*.

- Nashville, TN: World Bible Society, 1988.
- Whisenant, Edgar C. and Greg Brewer. *The Final Shout: Rapture Report 1989*. Nashville, TN: World Bible Society, 1989.
- Whiston, William. *A Vindication of the New Theory of the Earth*. London, UK: 1698.
- Whitby, Daniel. *A Paraphrase and Commentary on the New Testament*. London, UK: William Tegg and Company, 1849.
- White, John Wesley. *The Coming World Dictator*. Minneapolis, MN: Bethany Fellowship, 1981.
- . “The Great Physician’s RX for Mankind.” In *Earth’s Final Days: Essays in Apocalypse III*, edited by William T. James, 325-344. Green Forest, AR: New Leaf Press, 1994.
- White, Lynn, Jr. “The Historical Roots of Our Ecologic Crisis.” *Science* 155, no. 3767 (March 10, 1967): 1203-1207.
- . “The Historical Roots of Our Ecologic Crisis.” In *The Environmental Handbook: Prepared For The First National Environmental Teach-In*, edited by Garrett De Bell, 12-26. New York, NY: Ballantine Books, 1970.
- Whitehead, John W. *The Separation Illusion: A Lawyer Examines the First Amendment*. Milford, MI: Mott Media, 1977.
- Whitehead, John W. and John Conlan. “The Establishment of the Religion of Secular Humanism and Its First Amendment Implications.” *Texas Tech Law Review* 10, no. 1 (1978): 1-66.
- Wilkerson, David. *Set The Trumpet To Thy Mouth: Hosea 8:1*. Lindale, TX: World Challenge, Inc., 1985.
- “Who’s Who on the Right.” *Newsweek*, February 2, 1981.
- Widman, Ron. “When You’ve Seen One Beer Can You’ve Seen Them All.” *Eternity* 21, no. 5 (May, 1970): 12-14, 16, 29.
- Winiarski, Douglas L. *Darkness Falls on the Land of Light: Experiencing Religious Awakenings in Eighteenth-Century New England*. Chapel Hill, NC: University of

- North Carolina Press, 2017.
- Wilburn, Gary. "The Doomsday Chic." *Christianity Today* 21, no. 8 (January 27, 1978): 22-23.
- Wilcox, Clyde. *Onward Christian Soldiers? The Religious Right in American Politics*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 2000.
- . "Premillennialists at the Millennium: Some Reflections on the Christian Right in the Twenty-First Century." In *The Rapture of Politics: The Christian Right as the United States Approaches the Year 2000*, edited by Steve Bruce, Peter Kivisto, and William H. Swatos, Jr., 21-40. New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 1994.
- Wilkerson, David. *Set The Trumpet To Thy Mouth: Hosea 8:1*. Lindale, TX: World Challenge, Inc., 1985.
- Wilkinson, Katharine K. *Between God and Green: How Evangelicals are Cultivating a Middle Ground on Climate Change*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2012.
- Wilkinson, Loren. *Earthkeeping: Christian Stewardship of Natural Resources*. Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1980.
- . "Eco-Myths: Myth 3: There Is Nothing Christians Can Do." *Christianity Today* 37, no. 4 (April 4, 1994): 31-33.
- Williams, Ralph E. "Lee College." *Church of God Evangel* 42, no. 1 (March 3, 1951): 7.
- Wilson, E. O. *The Creation: An Appeal to Save Life on Earth*. New York, NY: W. W. Norton & Company, 2006.
- Winter, Ralph W. "The Highest Priority: Cross-Cultural Evangelism." In *Let The Earth Hear His Voice: International Congress on World Evangelization, Lausanne, Switzerland*, edited by J. D. Douglas, 226-241. Minneapolis, MN: World Wide Publications, 1975.
- Wimberly, C. F. "God's Red Lantern." *Church of God Evangel* 37, no. 6 (April 6, 1946): 8.

- Wirztum, Doron, Eliyahu Rips, and Yoav Rosenberg. "Equidistant Letter Sequence in the Book of Genesis." *Statistical Science* 9, no. 3 (August, 1994): 429-438.
- Wolf, Ron. "God, James Watt, and the Public's Land." *Audubon* 83, no. 3 (May, 1981): 57-65.
- Wolkomir, Michelle, et al. "Denominational Subcultures of Environmentalism." *Review of Religious Research* 38, no. 4 (June, 1997): 325-343.
- Wolkomir, Michelle, et al. "Substantive Religious Belief and Environmentalism." *Social Science Quarterly* 78, no. 1 (March, 1997): 96-108.
- Woodrum, Eric and Thomas Hoban. "Theology and Religiosity Effects on Environmentalism." *Review of Religious Research* 35, no. 3 (March, 1994): 193-206.
- Woodrum, Lon. "If Dropouts Turn On." *Christianity Today* 14, no. 2 (October 24, 1969): 18-19.
- Woodson, Leslie H. *Population, Pollution, and Prophecy*. Old Tappan, NJ: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1973.
- Worthen, Molly. *Apostles of Reason: The Crisis of Authority in American Evangelicalism*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2014.
- . "The Chalcedon Problem: Rousas John Rushdoony and the Origins of Christian Reconstructionism." *Church History* 77, no. 2 (June, 2008): 399-437.
- Zaleha, Bernard. "Intense Apocalypticism, Collective Narcissism, and Hellfire Extremism with the Calvary Chapel Movement: A Review of New Data Revealing Strong Barriers to Climate Change Concern." Lecture for the International Society for the Study of Religion, Nature, and Culture. Tempe, AZ: Arizona State University, 2023.
- Zuck, Roy B. "Clean Living In A Polluted World." *The King's Business* 61, no. 12 (December, 1970): 36-39.